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Motto: 1. Cor. 3, 22-23.
Πάντα ὑμῶν ἐστίν, ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ.

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VOL. 55. ST. LOUIS, MO. JANUARY 1927.

THREE ESSENTIALS FOR A MORE SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY

By Professor Philip Vollmer, Ph.D., D.D.

In my estimation, and speaking in general, the churches in America perhaps never had a more able, consecrated and efficient ministry than they are having today. But there is always room for improvement. The question therefore should always be uppermost in the mind of the conscientious minister, especially at the beginning of a new year, What must I get in order to more fully realize the idea of a successful pastor? It seems to me that during this transition period in the development of a new civilization the American minister needs (1) more spirituality, (2) a broader scholarship and (3) a stronger social note in his preaching.

I

Our Need of More Spirituality

By spiritual-mindness the New Testament means a life controlled by the Spirit of Christ who manifests himself by love, peace, humility, purity, soberness, faithfulness, devotion, prayer, meditation and all the many other individual and social Christian virtues stressed in the Bible. The most successful workers in the Kingdom of God have ever emphasized the cultivation of the preacher's *inner life,* that private meeting with God in the secret place of one's heart, which is often called the mystical aspect of Christianity. For "cor est quod facit theologum." Luther is said to have spent from two to three hours daily in prayer and medita-

tion. When the famous preacher, Claus Harms of Kiel, told a Quaker how much time he spent in teaching, preaching and conferences, the quaint man asked him, "And when art thou silent, so that God might speak to thee?" George Fox, the former of the Society of Friends, advises all Christians: "Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God, to run thy mind to the Lord God, from whom life comes; whereby thou mayest receive his strength, and power to allay all blustering storms and tempests." And the Quaker poet, John G. Whittier, prays:

"Breathe through the pulses of desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, its heats expire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!"

Christianity is primarily and essentially not a system of theology but a spirit of life, the spirit of Jesus Christ in men. This seems to have been the conviction of the earliest interpreters of Christianity, long before the diverse forms of modern Churches were thought of. Men were counted Christian or non-Christian, if they had or did not have the Spirit. "No one can say that Jesus is Lord save by the Holy Spirit." "He that is without the Spirit is none of His." "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three—the greatest of these is love." This spirit is not an indefinite mystic presence, nor an ecstatic mood; it expresses itself in a very substantial and effective way in thought and action and in all the relations of life—in the relation of man to God, of man to his fellows, of man to the world. When a scientist said to a Church deacon, "We are searching now for a way to produce light without heat; we want to discover cold light, the deacon replied, "Come around and hear our preacher; he has just graduated from Harvard."

Reasons For Our Need of More Spirituality

If it was ever necessary for us ministers to cultivate the inner life it is certainly now so, in these times of distraction in a pastor's life. The most conscientious servants of God often feel like a barren desert and are inclined to cry out for spiritual irrigation. We often share the experience of Goethe. In one of his frequent moods of unhappiness, he wrote this famous little poem of anguish and left it on his table:

"Ach, ich bin des Treibens muede,
Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust!
Suesser Friede,
Komm, ach komm in meine Brust!"

W. Goethe.

Translation:

"I am weary of the tumult;
What avails the joy or pain?
Peace so tranquil,
Come and fill my heart again!"

Goethe's literary friend, Frau von Kruedener, saw the poem and wrote under it the promise of the Saviour:
"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you."—*Jesus Christ.*

Dean Inge, "the gloomy dean," as an American reporter dubbed him because of his seriousness, amounting often to pessimism, assigns one important reason for our spiritual barrenness, when he said: "Most men, during their working and playing hours, are chiefly concerned with concrete things. Even students are more occupied in loading their memories than in contemplating ideals. And so when we try to turn our thoughts to God, when we kneel to pray or endeavor to remember heavenly things at spare moments, we find it very difficult. Our minds do not work easily or naturally on these subjetcs. There is something forced and unreal about our meditation or devotion. We find that we are not really praying at all, but only repeating words mechanically. And then comes the temptation to say: "My religion is a sham, and unreality. I wonder if the religion of others is only make-believe, too?" But this is quite natural and inevitable. If we spend sixteen hours daily of our waking life thinking about the affairs of this world, and about five minutes in thinking about God and our souls, this world will seem about two hundred times more real to us than God or our souls.

I will never forget the words my revered professor, Dr. Geo. Seibert, dictated to a class:—"The truths of the Spirit are not arrived at by process of logic, but by intuition and experience. The intellect is of utmost value within its sphere, and we rightly resent any slur thereon. But the sphere of the intellect is not the higher life of the soul. No man by searching ever found out God. There are some realities of such a personal nature that it is difficult to see how we can possibly know them unless we experience them. In the teaching of the Spirit, it is not reason laid aside, but reason in her most exalted mood exercised in connection with a higher receptive power which is personal and spiritual.

Lack of spiritual culture often leads to doubt and scepticism, and these psychological states again lead to greater barrenness. For truths that have nothing but speech to recommend them degenerate into cant. For the supreme peril is the habit of letting the mere discussion of the highest subjects become a substitute for the reality of them as acted on the stage of life. If you want your speech

about the highest things to keep true, you must continually act the thing you are speaking about. Former president Harper of Yale therefore warns the ministers: "Do not, for the sake of all you hold sacred, allow the existence of intellectual difficulties to interfere with the progress of your practical religious life. Many men think that, unless all their intellectual problems are settled, it is impossible to live a truly religious life. A more mistaken notion never entered a man's head. If you are a thinking man you will always have difficulties; new ones are apt to come forward even more rapidly than old ones are settled. Be not too greatly disturbed. If you are not a Christian, do not put off becoming one until they disappear. Such a time will never come. Go forward in Christian work and service. Follow the paths pointed out to you by the Scriptures. Let the difficulties be settled as your faith grows stronger and your Christian character becomes more firmly established."

These difficulties in a minister's life will explain the sharp censure of St. Chrysostom, when he asserted, "that it is hard for a priest to be saved," and of Büchsel, in his "Erinnerungen eines Landgeistlichen" that "it seems certain that only few pastors will be saved," and of General Superintendent Braun's little book "On the conversion of the Pastors."

Means to Cultivate Spirituality

The best means to cultivate the spiritual life in a minister as as in other Christians, are prayer and meditation. Both usually accompany one another. Prayer is pre-eminently communion with God. It is being in His conscious presence. It is interchange of thought. It is pouring out our souls before God. It takes us out of our narrow, selfish petitions, and brings us into the communionship of God, which we seek because it is so sweet and blessed.

The great power of private devotions and public worship are most beautifully set forth in the following poem by the Episcopal archbishop Trench:

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all the distant and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear!
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,

Anxious or troubled, when with us in prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with thee?"

Personally I have also found the use of devotional books and biographies of great help in cultivating spirituality; as, for example, "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas A. Kempis. It is mediaeval in its point of views, but its expressions are often rich like those of the Psalms and Proverbs. It is said that Henry Ward Beecher kept three copies of "The Imitation of Christ" always within reach, one in his study, one in his sleeping room and one in his drawing room. Furthermore, I can think of nothing more helpful to one who is in mental and spiritual darkness, or isolation, than the biographies of Frederick Robertson and Phillips Brooks, and, for those who need inspiration to holy service, than the life stories of such men as David Livingstone and Henry Drummond. The sermons of Bushnell, Brooks and Robertson are a better spiritual tonic for these days than a whole library of the fathers. Three sermons may be especially mentioned, viz., Robertson's on "Obedience the Organ of Scripture Knowledge," Brooks's on "The Positiveness of the Divine Life," and Bushnell's on "Unconscious Influence." These three sermons, if thoroughly appropriated, would furnish food for years of thought, for they are the almost perfect expression of long and fruitful experiences.

In my younger years I have often regretted that, to my knowledge, we do not have in the English language a Protestant "Brevier" for ministers, similar to that for Catholic priests which would guide the clericus in such devotions specifically suited to him. For some time I have used the German Protestant prayer-book for ministers, by Dieffenbach, but I don't know whether it is still for sale. In Europe the ministers occasionally hold "Pastoral Retreats." Of late we have used this name also in America for pastoral conferences; but they have not been a success as far as spiritualizing our life and ministry is concerned because we do too much talking and discussing in those meetings and too little praying and meditating.

Religious meditation is called by some writers "passive prayer." I once heard Inspector Rappard of St. Chrischona, explain this activity of the soul thus: "Passive prayer is that state of heart when a child of God draws near to his heavenly Father, not with fixed purpose to plead for some special blessing, but with quietly receptive mind and heart, to permit him to give what he will. Some nights we are too tired to pray. The spirit is willing, but brain and nervous system are well-nigh exhausted. Under such conditions we gain most by just opening the windows of our souls Godward and waiting the work of his will in us. The anxious mind becomes tranquilized; perplexity is replaced by quiet trust; dis-

couragement gives place to confidence; the bodily organs themselves perform their functions more normally; the health of the whole man is reestablished."—The same idea is expressed by the poet Coleridge:

"Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble trust mine eyelids close,
With reverential resignation.
No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication;
A sense o'er my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, everywhere
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are."

As helpful books on this whole subject I would recommend: *Jefferson,* Hints to Growing Ministers. *Fosdick,* The Meaning of Prayer, *Bell,* What Did Jesus Really Teach About Prayer? *Royden,* Prayer as a Force.

II

The Pastor's Need of a Broader Scholarship

We have seen that the essential element in a minister's religion is to possess the genuine article in great abundance; that is, to live a spirit-controlled life. But a very desirable addition is to know also as much as possible of the theory of religion, known as theology, in all its ramifications. For the pastor this combination is indispensable to success.

Serious Charges of Neglect

There is a wide-spread and strongly voiced complaint of poor preaching. When the Archbishop of Canterbury recently charged that sparsely attended church services were due to inadequacy of the present-day sermons and that the majority of priests in the Episcopal Church were derelict in their duties he caused more of a stir than appears on the surface, according to well informed church-men. It is said that priests throughout the diocese of London have decided to abandon the "kid glove" variety of sermon and that hereafter their parishioners will be treated to vigorous Christianity delivered with a punch.

Rev. Dr. J. D. Jones, president of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in his recent address at Bournemouth indicated he had about the same views as the Episcopal prelate. He

told the assembled ministers that present-day church methods call for sermons with a greater grip. He insisted that the only successful church was one in which the pastor made it throb with life and power. He held that sermons with reality in them, with a redeeming Gospel at the heart of it were the ones that were driven home.

Dean W. R. Inge, of St. Paul's Cathedral, in the London Spectator, has said that the chronic dissatisfaction of churchgoers and others with the spiritual and intellectual food provided for them on Sundays has become more vocal than usual, and that many clergymen have protested that their critics do not seem to realize the difficulties with which they have to contend. "But the standard of preaching in the Church of England is very low," says the Dean. Not only is the average sermon uninspiring, in his opinion, but there is a dearth of outstanding preachers whose reputations can be compared with those of Liddon, Magee, Beecher, Phillips Brooks and Farrar. "Most of the preaching in Anglican churches is unworkmanlike, and even slovenly, if we judge it as we should judge other professional work," writes the Dean. "Our preachers do not study the art of hortatory eloquence as the Nonconformist ministers do, nor do they as a rule put so much thought into their discourses as the Scottish Presbyterians, from whom their people demand stronger meat than would be acceptable to most English congregations."

Also in America, the lack of thought, the looseness of construction and the poor delivery of thousands of sermons is felt as an offense to the average intelligence of Church-goers, and especially to the hundreds of thousands of educated persons who fortunately still throng our churches on every Sunday. Poor preaching is the more deplorable because it indicates that the level of education has been lowered with many preachers while at the same time it has been raised among the laity through the schools, the libraries, the forums and other popular educational agencies. Even the far-away hidden country church has usually several graduates of the higher institutions of learning in its membership.

It should be noticed that the complaint is not much about poor delivery, or even illogical construction, much as the people like to see these two elements also, but of *poverty of thought*. The people do not require deep thinking, but high thinking. A minister should be able to show men and women how to get the power that will sustain them when discouraged, make them masters of their own spirits, keep them calm in the midst of the tempest, and give them courage, fidelity, energy, and reasonableness when they have a work to do or a cause to maintain. Unless the churches can

appeal to men's minds as well as to their hearts, they will sooner or later be set aside as mere temples of rhetoric or turned into secular civic welfare clubs. Their congregations, their minds still hungry for instruction, will be grazing in the forbidden pastures of spiritualism, theosophy and other fashionable cults of superstition. Swamis, mahatmas, fakirs, mediums and faith healers will glean the field which pastor, priest and rabbi have neglected.

More Scholarship

The remedy for the defect of "thought-less" preaching lies in greater devotion to study, in wider reading, and in deeper intellectual thinking. A British scholar wrote recently: Our ministers seem smartly up-to-date in all respects but one, and that is theology. Most of them do not seem to have any, or any interest in any. By theology I do not mean a particular system of dogmatic doctrine but rather the habit of thinking about the fundamentals of faith and reason about the metaphysics that lie at the base of physics, the psychology which controls character and motivization, the personal philosophy that is the compass of conduct. It is the schools of science, not the schools of theology, that are turning out the thinkers in such fields. We are in the midst of the greatest revolution of thought that the world has ever seen—the Einstein theory of relativity, the Plank theory of quanta, the Chromosome theory of heredity, the Harmone theory of temperament, the new knowledge of the constitution of the universe and of the workings of the human mind. These ideas will influence the philosophy, theology, sociology, religion and morals of the future as much as did the Copernican theory in the sixteenth century and the Darwinian theory in the nineteenth. Such questions would have arrested the keenest interest in the minds of men like Edwards, Berkeley, Calvin, Aquinas or Paul. A student in engineering or biology will sit up half the night discussing these theories, but your modern theological graduate is bored by them. If the church is to be anything more than the Boosters' Club of Zenith City there has got to be some hard thinking done by those at the head of it during the next 20 years. Somebody has got to seize hold of these new conceptions and point out their moral applications. Otherwise, somebody else will make immoral application of them.

For example, why is it that we hear so much non-sense in many American pulpits about the alleged danger of the evolutionary theory of creation to the Bible and the Christian religion? Is it not lack of scholarship and ignorance of the faith that true religion and science cannot clash, while science and theology have often clashed. We fail to understand that no generation reaches finality in theology. Fundamentalism and modernism are no ex-

ception. Religious controversies were rampant when I was entering the field of theology. Mankind never reaches the goal of absolute truth. To know all is to be God.' In the words of Alfred Tennyson,

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee;
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

If our religious faith is bound up with any theory of cosmogony or of human origin, then that faith simply has to stand aside while the battle of theories goes forward, for its foundations are the issue, and meanwhile the world is bereft of its power and the hearts of men cry out in vain for its comfort. But there is something within us that protests against such a low view of the gospel and recoils from a religious faith that finally rests its case upon the statutory enactments of a legislature. The spectacle is one to make our minds weep, even if we had not souls.

A Wider Reading

It is therefore impossible to overestimate the importance of reading for the minister of the gospel. A pastor who reads wisely will have material for his own mental enrichment, matter for sermons and addresses, as well as for other contingencies that arise in the life of every active clergyman. One who fails to read will not only starve himself but others, and in the end meet with humiliating defeat. In view of the fact that our homes are filled with literature of all kinds, and that important questions are being constantly discussed in school, church, society and lecture hall, it becomes increasingly evident that one cannot fill his place in current life except he read, read and read. The coming of the radio is destined to place the knowledge of the world within easy reach of every one interested in its manifold activities. I do not think that anything can become a substitute for preaching, but I do think that it will be necessary for the minister to enlarge his field of investigation if he is to keep in touch with the great movements of the day. It is for him to be so well informed on all matters that no occasion will find him wholly unprepared. And that is quite possible. Such a one will be a great blessing to his day and generation.

Help from Our Seminaries

If the people want better equipped preachers and teachers, four things are necessary:—(1) They must send the best talented men to our theological seminaries. The teacher of theology may beat crude gold into shape, but he cannot transform brass into gold. —(2) Our Protestant seminaries must be so equipped that they

will command the respect of college men. The members of the faculty must be capable men; the methods of instruction should compare favorably with those of post-graduate courses in the universities. The spirit of investigation and personal research should go hand in hand with the spirit of reverence and of devotion. Libraries, scholarships, fellowships and lectureships are indispensable in a well-equipped theological school—(3) The graduate departments which happily are being introduced in our seminaries, must be strengthened. A prominent scholar said recently: "It has been one of the most unfortunate results of the divorce of theology from the university, that theology has not had its just share in the great advance of education in the past half-century." When one considers the enormous development that has taken place in the medical schools of the country, the advance in the study of law, the unfolding of graduate departments of the universities, and the increased length of preparation for men entering the various other vocations of life, the lack of advanced requirements for the Christian ministry is evidently a serious matter.—(4) High-grade correspondence courses for our younger ministers already in the pastorate should be intelligently developed, for they have proved inspirational to many an alert young minister.

III.

Our Need of a Stronger Social Note in Preaching

In order to be real, timely (zeitgemaess) effective, successful, and "to touch the spot," all our preaching must be socially oriented. That is, it must start with the regeneration through repentance, faith and progressive sanctification of the individual but salvation must not stop with him. Groups of men—the family, industry, labor unions, schools, courts, nations, the press, etc.—sin as groups, and the converted individual must therefore pour his regenerated life into these groups and work for their group regeneration. All this is expressed in the abbreviated phrase, "preaching the social gospel." In view of the large amount of explanatory literature on this subject it seems to be high time to stop the constant misunderstanding of the position of the advocates of the social gospel, as if they undervalued the prime importance of the regeneration of the individual, and as if they taught that social reforms and social service were equivalent with the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. We are surely intelligent enough to agree with Herbert Spencer, "There is no social alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts." But we also have learned from Christ that the key-word of his teaching "kingdom of God" which he uses more than a hundred times and defines as *"the doing of God's will* on earth" is a *social* conception, and a very comprehen-

sive one, including thousands of details. So, for example, when slavery is abolished, better housing conditions established, politics cleansed, etc., we have a right to say that, as far as these reforms go, the kingship of God has been realized on earth. There is indeed a New Testament Sociology; in fact there is as much material in the Gospels to construct a sociology as there is for a theology, as any intelligent reader of the gospels, with pencil in hand, may find out for himself. And it is Christ's kind of sociology which his ministers should teach and preach. Not sociology as such, not socialistic, or capitalistic, or communistic, or Republican, or Democratic, or American, German or British sociology, but New Testament sociology, that is, Christ's specific teachings on the individual, on sin and salvation, on the family and the state, on poverty and wealth, on war and peace, on international relations, etc.

Says Prof. Ellwood: "If the aim of social religion is the production of men, of the values connected with human personality, then one of its first tasks must be to help devise a system of business and industry, of work and material reward, which will be in harmony with that aim. Religion dare not be merely a system of abstract ideals and values out of relation with real life. It must be a set of practical attitudes towards practical problems. It is idle to talk of the Kingdom of God, of an ideal social order in which the divine will is realized, as long as an essentially pagan economic system persists. The economic life must be dominated by humanitarian ethics if ever such an order is to be realized."

It is therefore the minister's part to bring the corporate conscience of the Church to play on the corporate manifestations of the life of the day. There are those who would question the authority of Christ over politics, national and international, industry and economics. As statesmen, captains of industry, and economists they challenge the competence of the Church to enter their sphere. The blame rests with the churchmen chiefly. They have weakly surrendered or weakened the jurisdiction over life which our Lord has committed to His Church. Many moralists and theologians have conceived the ideal Christian life as lived not exactly in vacuo, but certainly not amid the concrete relationships of social life, while the ecenomists and politicians have long been scheduled to think that their problems were exclusively technical. We seek for reconciliation and cooperation here as in the case of religion and science. The duty of the Church is not to interfere with the proper function of the State, of science, of economics, but to claim final jurisdiction over the moral and spiritual implications in their operation. It is the common business of the Church to enlist in the service of the Kingdom of God on earth technical and expert knowl-

edge of every sort. If it does not there will be—indeed there already is—the devil to pay. Science without a soul is a menace. So is the State. So is industry. So is society. St. John says that any organization or phase of life apart from God "lieth in the evil one." We should aim at the focusing of all that is best in Christian thinking about the present social life of the world—its merits and defects, its tendencies upward or downward, the opportunities it affords for Christian witness and service and the possibilities of shaping it along better lines.

Conclusion

There are many more activities of the minister necessary to success, for example, conscientious visitation of his own people and of strangers—but the three mentioned seem paramount at this critical time. Let us remember that success is never accidental. It is always bought at a high price. And the steps to success are much the same, in whatever walk of life. Men whose intellectual achievements rank them as the world's great scholars may seem to be of a class by themselves. But what makes a scholar? A writer in a well known encyclopedia of biography says, "It is that rare combination of profound insight, sustained attention, microscopic accuracy, iron tenacity, and disinterested pursuit of truth, which characterizes the great scientist." The theologian can well afford to learn from the scientist in these respects, and advance as far as he may in the acquisition of these desirable qualities.

Out of the great mass of literature on the social gospel I will recommend the following books for study.

That the Ministry be not Blamed. By John A. Hutton.

The Prophetic Ministry for Today. By Charles D. Williams.

Ambassadors of God. By S. Parkes Cadman.

The Will of God, Horstmann.

New Testament Sociology, Vollmer.

Christianity and the Social Crisis, Rauschenbusch.

THE DILEMMA OF THE EDEN GRADUATE

By H. Reifschneider

In late years the practice has become general in our Synod, that our young men from the seminary enter upon their appointed fields of labor some time early in fall. The task of gathering the eligible children for a confirmation class immediately confronts them. After they have successfully overcome the apathy of the parents and the indifference of the children, they still face a rather sinister problem, second to none, not only to themselves, but also to our entire church. Peculiarly enough, no mention of it has ever been made in public. But such things have happened before, and this is really no exception. In recent years, the Eden graduate has frequently been the object of severe criticism, and while no one cares to deny that faults can be found, nevertheless, the circumstance that no time has ever been found to try to understand the problems and difficulties of our young men, is indicting. Impartial consideration of the whole matter plainly indicates, that the young man out of Eden has been "more sinned against than sinning." Out of the host of difficulties and problems that face the young man that enters the ministry in our denomination at the present time, let us just consider one of them.

Our Synod desires, that Eden be "up to date", that it keep abreast with the times. Well, our seminary has heeded that expectation. Our theological seminary is teaching a modern, constructive, positive theology. But in order to do that, books produced by the best minds of the entire Christian world, must be used as text books and must be recommended for reading outside of classes. The students then in the Introduction to the O. T. examine "the scientific accuracy of the Genesis story, the universality of the flood, the literal standing still of the sun at the command of Joshua, the bears destroying the lives of forty children as a punishment for mocking at a prophet's bald head, the imprecatory psalms, the command of God to slaughter all prisoners of war, including women and children, and to stone a son to death for disbodience and an old man for gathering sticks on the Sabbath," while in the introduction to the N. T. they scrutinize the apostolicity of Epistles and the authenticity of the Gospels. The results are familiar to us all. The authority of our catechism therefore is immediately jeopardized in the mind of our young man just coming from Eden, when he notices to his surprise, that the book of doctrine placed into his hands quotes the Apostles more than two-hundred times, the O. T. more than one-hundred times, while the quotations from the sayings of Jesus, run a very poor third, quoted less than one-

hundred times; in other words, Christ as a catechetical authority does not even play the proverbial invidious second fiddle.

Of course we are told, that the authors of our catechism were "Biblicists" and that we on the other hand approach the Bible from the historical point of view, but that we arrive at the same goal. Even if we should grant such an extremely doubtful contention, the practice of teaching one theology in our seminary and expecting our graduates to preach another, will unquestionably exert a pernicious influence, and will cause hopeless confusion, since these two views inevitably lock horns at every step.

For example, in systematic theloogy we are now told that, "since the belief in angels is not a necessary part of the religious experience and therefore not a necessary constituent of the Christian doctrinal system it is needless for Dogmatics to include a special doctrine of angels." Evidently, the authors of our catechism did not feel that way about angelology. Three questions and answers, 59, 60, 61, respectively, are included in our catechism that discuss the matter rather thoroughly. Especially 61 is typical of the entire procedure. The authors of our catechism felt justified to ignore the Sermon on the Mount in order to speculate about a mythological hint in 2 Peter, concerning which Epistle there is today among the scholars practical unanimity that it belongs to the middle of the second century and is therefore unquestionably pseudonymous (Bacon p. 170-173). Considering his training, what can the Eden graduate be expected to do with this devil-episode-dogma? Teach it? "explain" it? ignore it? deny it? What honorable way, if any, is there open to him?

His embarrassment increases as he proceeds. Immediately following the just mentioned phantastic speculative dogma, we have the doctrine of man in our catechism. This subject is really basic and far more important than the preceding and therefore the scruples of our young men become more persistent and correspondingly painful. No one denies that theological thought, even in our church, has undergone considerable change within the last half century. Our periodicals, discourses at pastoral and district gatherings, and schools, give ample proof for such a contention. But our catechism is still perfectly innocent on that point. It still records the orthodox Lutheran conceptions of the early men of our church. It presupposes that nothing has happened since Melanchthon. In all seriousness it continues to ask,

64. What were the sad consequences of this fall of man?

and answers authoritatively,

Man lost the image of God, etc.

If our Eden graduate is unwilling to trust his memory and will

look up his notes, he will find the following terse statement corroborating his suspicion: Old Protestant Dogmatic Theology made one of its chief mistakes in teaching "that the divine image was lost in consequence of the fall of the first man. For if the divine image denotes the destiny of man and the capacity which he possesses therefore, there is certainly opposition to this destiny in a perverted direction of the will, and thus there is abuse of the capacity, but not forfeiture of the destiny and the corresponding capacity. At least this is as long as man is regarded as being capable of redemption. Moreover, the express statement ad locum of Scripture in the N. T. as well as in the Old (Gen. 9, 6; James 3, 9; 1 Cor. 2: 7) presupposes as something obvious that even sinful mankind is possessed of the image of God". In other words, you flunk in Eden in case you answer in an examination that man lost the image of God as a consequence of the fall of the first man, while if you teach the answer that is there considered correct, after you have entered the ministry, you will be denounced as a heretic. Eulenspiegel could certainly not have thought of a more ridiculous situation. But then to continue, while the young man is in his study and has the catechism in one hand and his notes from Eden in the other:

> 65. What is now the natural state of man?
>
> Since the fall man is corrupt, therefore unfit for anything good, but prepared for and inclined to evil. This inherited corruption is called original sin.

And when he looks into his notes, he finds that "it is a mistake to regard sin essentially only from the point of view of something inherited, and furthermore to explain this heritage as a heritage of guilt—an exaggeration against which it was the Christian conscience itself that rose in protest." And again,

> 66. What grows out of original sin?
>
> Out of original sin grows actual sin; that is, all thoughts and desires, words and deeds, whereby evil is done or good is neglected, etc.

But his notes tell him that "it is wrong to hold that all sin has its basis in the first sin—thus failing to take proper account of the immeasurable distinctions found among sinful men, and at the same time making it impossible to regard sin as personal sin at all."

The dissimilarity throughout is the result of the basic difference of opinion concerning God and morality. The authors of our catechism had a thoroughly legalistic and magic conception of Christianity, in spite of their continual recourse to the idea of faith. Even our catechetical arrangement plainly shows that their theology is a deduction of Deut. 27, 26: "Cursed be he that confirmeth

not all the words of this law do them." The result can only be one: christianized Judaism, accepting the premise of Catholicism, but avoiding its conclusion by the sacrifice of logic. Today we have a higher conception of God and morality. Basing our theology on "God is love" (1 John 4: 8) and taking uncompromisingly the lofty morality of Christ seriously, we arrive at quite a different solution. Our God of love, the Heavenly Father of Jesus, does not condemn countless generations on account of the error of a poorly informed woman in prehistoric times, nor does He wreak vengeance on His innocent Son and consider that moral justification of His righteousness. Modern theology in short, is controlled by an altogether different spirit. To be specific, let us consider question

77. Whereby did Christ accomplish our redemption?
Christ accomplished our redemption by His suffering and death, in which He endured, in our stead, the wrath of God against sin, thereby redeeming us from sin, satan and death.

At Eden, in answer to the question, "In what sense does the interposition of Christ come to our advantage?" the following is held to be true: "His interposition before God in our favor does not consist of an act that has direct reference to God, but of one which has reference in the first instance to us.—Accordingly, we have not by a judgment of God a transference to us of a performance of His, as that of another person; but we have a recognition of what he affects in us, as an act of His, which is meritorious in the judgment of God." The question here involved is vital to the peace of mind and plainly shows the unbearable dilemma that is continually thrust upon the young man that leaves the seminary.

Morally, a minor consideration, and yet, extremely irritating is the form of our catechism. Many of our States decree by law, that text books in schools cannot be used longer than ten years. Although a strict parallel cannot be drawn between readers, arithmetics, etc., and our catechism, it is nevertheless preposterous to contend that a book written three quarters of a century ago, answers the purpose of today. There are scarcely any educational principles that our catechism does not violate. It is also generally conceded, that our catechism is a stiff, technical, metaphysical, philosophical compendium of theology. Christ has been accused of teaching Divine Right Autocracy, Socialism, Communism, and the late Luther Burbank hailed Him as the first real atheist. But no one has ever been brazen enough to accuse the hur[illegible]e Nazarene of teaching theology. Is it surprising then, that [illegible]oung men, trained in the modern science of education, imbu[illegible]e p[illegible] the social implications of the Gospel, are baffled, when the[illegible] into the

of in

ministry and find, that they are expected to work with pedagogical ideas of the Reformation and inculcate cut and dried theology whenever opportunity offers itself?

While the teaching of theology is both educationally unsound as well as reprehensible from a Christian point of view, it is useless for the time being to agitate against it. If however we are going to teach our children theology, let it be that theology that comes closest to our convictions. No one will claim that a catechism can be written that will suit every one doctrinally, nor a creed that will be subscribed to by all. There will always be some difference of opinion and in an Evangelical Church, that is not at all an undesirable symptom. And yet, our creed should strike some sort of mean. The official doctrinal statement of our Synod should express the general or the majority confession of faith. Our catechism, unfortunately the doctrinal criterion of our Denomination, plainly fails to measure up to that very reasonable explanation, as it now stands, nor does the proposed revision sent to us last year indicate any sign of real revision in the general sense of the term. The inevitable result will be, that our "revised" catechism will be obsolete to the great majority of our pastors from the very day of publication. It will mark a demoralizing setback and not progress.

Statistics show that we are still educationally lagging. Confirmation plays a cardinal role in our program, and a real text-book would be of inestimable value to the pastor in his efforts to train our children for a Christian life. As the case now stands, our catechism is more of a hindrance to many than a help. Our young men now have the choice of throwing it over board altogether or "explaining" things to satisfy their conscience. It is simply unfair to confront them with such a dilemma. They have enough battles to fight, without being forced to confront difficulties where they have a moral right to expect support and encouragement. Youth is rash, and although we exceedingly regret that some have thrown our catechism into the waste-basket in favor of something of their own choice, we understand and sympathize with them. The entire situation is not at all auspicious for our Church. The situation demands Christian honesty. Although we no longer can accept the theology of the founders of our church body in all its details, we can emulate their example, in that we also put down what we actually believe, and then say what we actually mean.

LUTHER'S MESSAGE TO US*

A. W. Nagler, Evanston, Ill.

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A message coming out of the past is not always appreciated. Especially when it comes from one who was regarded by many devout Christians of his day as the arch-heretic. Neither do we always realize that those men who have been the world's greatest advance agents of progress often received scant praise from their contemporaries. Although later ages usually appraise them at their true worth and give them credit for blazing the trail along which developing life wends its tortuous way, their own age, through misunderstanding and prejudice, often applied the torch and used the scaffold.

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future."

Although Luther lived in the shadow of the scaffold he dared to defy an overbearing ecclesiasticism and dared to oppose an ossified mediævalism in the interests of the autonomy of the individual. What boots it that they called him a heretic! It is not the fact that you are called a heretic that counts, but only by whom you were so called, and why.

I. The Significance of the Protestant Revolution

In former days the Reformation was usually represented as a great break between the mediæval and the modern world. It was pictured as the great divide; before, the mediæval; afterward, the modern era. Today the pendulum in some quarters has swung to the opposite extreme, the tendency becoming to regard it merely as a crisis, the new conception of life and religion, according to this theory, not being ushered in till the Aufklaerung of the eighteenth century in connection with the Anabaptist and the spiritualistic contributions. It is true that much of mediævalism was perpetuated; that, in its inception, the Protestant movement retained and emphasized the traditional doctrines of the total depravity and the helplessness of man; that the revolt even retarded the growth of the modern spirit which raised its head in the preceding period. Furthermore, a wider knowledge of history compels us to admit that the old was not all wrong; indeed, in some respects it was better than the new. For instance, in a more definite way, though not in its ideal form, it magnified unity, solidarity and cooperation, as against schism, sectionalism and sectarianism. It stood for a greater independence of the religious as against the political com-

* This appreciation of the Reformer by a Methodist will be of interest to our readers. *Ed.*

munity and in the age that followed might have served as a more effective foil to a fast-growing hyper-nationalism and a swiftly expanding economic imperialism. For, with Eucken, we can say that it "more energetically resisted a merely secular development of civilization, a decline into mere expediency and utility."

In addition to this imposing array of positive deficiencies, defects may be noted in the immature development of the Reformation itself. It perpetuated much of the old anthropomorphic view of God and the dualistic view of life. There remained too much of acquiescence and passive endurance of an irrational and evil world, too little expression was given in support of an active, aggressive Christian impact upon the world with a view to its transformation. This still seems to be characteristic of Lutheranism in Europe, as the Stockholm conference demonstrated. A final consideration involves the contradictions in Luther's teaching. He struggled against authority and introduced another kind; he combated scholastic intellectualism to find himself paying homage to a sort of intellectualistic doctrinalism. Nevertheless, despite these qualifying admissions, historical facts seem to bear out the contention of the old school that the Protestant life-principle was present in the beginning of the movement, only to gain its fuller expression in a later age, after the new scholasticism had suffered shipwreck upon the rocks of Pietism and the Aufklaerung, and a new freedom had become possible out of the war between the sects and out of a wider horizon opened up through modern science.

II. Luther the Exponent of Essential Protestantism

While recognizing the defects, the immaturity, and the contradictions of the Reformation, and the additional fact that Grisar, the Roman Catholic historian, stresses, namely, that modern Protestantism is more willing than was Luther to push his principles to their logical and legitimate conclusion, still this doughty German, more than any other, must be regarded as the exponent of essential Protestantism. He was that, because he was the personal embodiment of the movement as it developed under his leadership. In the early sixteenth century four great potentates ruled the mind of Europe: the Pope, the Emperor, Erasmus, and Luther, and the greatest of these was Luther. Although he cannot be ranked with Erasmus or Melanththon in scholarship; though he did not possess the broad humanistic sympathies of Zwingli; though he was not Calvin's equal as a logical reasoner and systematizer of theological thought, as the outstanding leader, the adamantine soul, the potent spiritual dynamo, he was by all odds *the prophet* of the new religious movement. Although much of his teaching can be found in the reformers and the mystics who preceded him, especially in

Meister Eckhart, who was even broader and freer in the doctrinal content of his message, his significance lay primarily in the peculiarly propitious conditions of his own day and in the preponderating influence wielded by him upon succeeding ages. We are thus led to inquire as to the significance of his religious leadership.

III. Significance of Luther's Religious Leadership

In him were focused all the scattered rays of a widely extending protest and reaction. His magnetic, deeply spiritual, and intellectually penetrating personality caused the smoldering embers of a dying individualism to strike fire. In a surprisingly short time, multitudes of spiritually oppressed people awoke to the fact that a mighty prophet had arisen, that again an inspired forth-teller of the Most High had spoken. Immediately, he became the mouthpiece of a great number who were seeking to get back of the external and the stereotyped into the inner source of truth and life, and who felt dissatisfied when told that salvation depended upon having right relations to external media. While the church authorities were thundering against the reckless monk and impudent professor for his alleged sacrilegious attack upon things held inviolate he became the acknowledged spokesman of an ever increasing number from whose eyes the scales began to fall. This he became, not merely because of his native powers of mind and heart, not merely because he proclaimed the message of authority at the psychological moment, but, in an equal degree, it was due to the fact that he had experienced their troubles and heart-pains through all the various tragic stages of a blind seeking for salvation, a passionate yearning for a gracious God. The light flashed into his own mind, and he, in turn, flashed it into the minds of his fellow seekers.

He became a second Paul as he assumed the role of the liberator of Christianity from the trammels of mediæval legalism. He reacted against the position of his church in her substitution of ecclesiasticism for religion, her substitution of the institution for the individual, and, we might add, her substitution of the church for God. The hierarchical system had found the essence of religion in a vast structure outside the soul. Schleiermacher had this in mind when he wrote his famous comparison: "Romanism makes the relation of the individual to Christ depend upon his relation to the church; Protestantism makes the relation of the individual to the church depend upon his relation to Christ." Thus, Protestantism must place Christliness first, churchliness second.

IV. Luther's Contribution

Protestantism, as its name implies, was a protest. But that does not exhaust its meaning. It was more than mere negation,

for had Luther been nothing but a great destroyer he would have failed. Over against traditionalism and out of the capacious soul of the man there issued forth a real positive contribution to the world. The three great pillars which he set up to support the partially destroyed structure of organized Christianity were: (1) the supremacy of the Bible; (2) the supremacy of faith; (3) the supremacy of the people. The first has been called the objective, the second the subjective, the third the social principle of the Reformation.

1. The Bible. The Bible was not wholly inaccessible, nor was it a proscribed book before the advent of Protestantism. But it was, practically, a lost book, not only hidden from the eyes of the masses, but also hidden in a mass of glosses and traditions. Since substitutes commonly took its place, for religious purposes it was not. Luther himself knew what it meant to discover it and then to escape from the "swaddling clothes of the allegorizing method." As late as 1513 he found as many as six senses in some of the Psalms. But he came to base his Bible exegesis upon what we may call the right of private judgment, in some respects approaching the principles of our modern historical approach. He contended, for instance, that the chief value is to be placed upon the simple literal sense. In his own words: "the single, right, chief meaning which the letters give." This brought him to value the historical sense, though still under the bondage of the spiritualizing, mystical process. While emphasizing the fact that Scripture must be looked at objectively, that we must find out what the Bible really says and not what we would like to have it say, and that Scripture was to interpret itself, he was unable entirely to shake off the scholastic influence.

Aquinas had proclaimed the Word of God as found in Scripture as the basic source of all Christian doctrine, as the revealer of God and of divine things. Luther's teaching included all this and more. His was an attitude toward the Bible which differed from the prevailing conception. By reading Scripture we are brought into more intimate fellowship with the heavenly Father, resulting in the renewal and the quickening of the inner life. The Bible, in short, is a means of grace, a devotional book, as well as a source of divine truth.

2. As regards the second cardinal doctrine, justification by faith alone, a similar difference in meaning appears. It is quite right to say that Luther placed this doctrine over against the mediæval doctrine of salvation by works. But he did more. He used the term, justification, in a different connotation than was the custom with the mediævalists. It did not imply cold assent to re-

ligious truth, it did not mean to make righteous; instead it signified, as distinct from sanctification, a personal experience by which the soul discovered a gracious God through Christ. With him the concept of faith triumphed over the content of faith. The faith which believes is greater than the faith which is believed. Works are manifestly necessary and cannot be separated from faith. To use Luther's phrase, one might as well try to separate burning and shining from fire. But works are not the condition of justification. The heart of the Reformer's claim was that forgiveness could never be purchased nor merited by human conduct. This important distinction has kept the Protestant world remarkably free from legalism and sacramentarianism. And it was not a mere distinction without a difference, as a group of hostile critics is apt to charge. It was more than another squabble over an into, to employ Gibbon's diagnosis of the early Arian crisis, as a brief sketch of the implications of the doctrine will show.

In the first place, this notion of faith created a demand for a new religious liberty. Since man can do nothing to earn his salvation, is he not freed from the old bondage to an institution with its creeds and its sacraments? It goes without saying that this did not imply their repudiation as necessary and divinely appointed means of grace. To quote Luther's magnificent paradox, taken from the devotional classic, *On Christian Liberty:* A Christian is not only "the most free, lord of all and subject to none," but, in his new-found liberty, he is "the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one." By which he meant that man is not made new and free in Christ Jesus for the mere sake of being free. Liberty in itself is not sufficient, despite the mouthings of the personal liberty clubs, so called. Liberty dare not be made an end in itself. Liberty, one of the noblest concepts of humanity, becomes thrice noble when it is a liberty that consciously, eagerly submerges itself in service. We are set free, not to enjoy that freedom in selfishness, but, in the words of the great liberator of the sixteenth century: "What is it to serve God and do his will? Nothing else than to show mercy to one's neighbor. For it is our neighbor who needs our service; God in heaven needs it not."

A second implication recalls Wesley's doctrine of assurance. The earlier reformer declared that man must know that he is saved. Before he can be in a state of spiritual preparedness, before he can devote all his energies to serve his brother, he must be wholly free from all fear as regards his own religious state and future destiny. No Damocles sword of a terrifying future retribution must hang suspended above his head. "When you know that you have through Christ a good and gracious God," Luther triumphantly concludes,

"then you are lord over heaven and earth with Christ; you have nothing more to do than to go about your business and serve your neighbor."

A third implication resolves itself into a new appraisement of the present world. Salvation must be regarded as a present reality. Traditionally, this life had been regarded as a preparation for the life to come. Salvation, consequently, had been pushed into the future. And so, the dominant note of mediæval piety had been other-worldliness. Luther refused to accept that interpretation of his church in his assertion that man is saved here and now as truly as he ever will be in heaven. That gave to this world a reality and value of its own. That boldly upheld the sanctity of the common relations of life. To cite one characteristic utterance, "It looks like a great thing when a monk renounces everything and goes into a cloister, and carries on a life of asceticism. . . . On the other hand it looks like a small thing when a maid cooks and cleans and does other house-work. But because God's command is here, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns." This teaching of the sanctification of the secular has been of the most tremendous social importance.

3. The Social Principle. We now stand before the third pillar of the Reformation, commonly called the priesthood of all believers. This, the democratic pronuncement of the movement, obliterated the gulf which separated the clergy from the laity. In place of an exclusive hierarchy and a privileged priesthood, now stood the common believer, a priest, prophet and king, by divine right, under the spiritual priesthood and the prophetic and kingly office of Christ. This made the Reformation distinctively a lay movement. And in the religious sphere it was increasingly to mean what universal suffrage means in the political sphere. And yet with democracy as we understand it Luther had little sympathy. He was forced to use all his energy in destroying the supreme bulwark of privilege, and, in the nature of the case, was blinded to those grand vistas of the rights of common man which later ages slowly portrayed. And was it not worth while to insist upon the freedom of the state from ecclesiastical domination? This accomplishment, together with the elevation of the spiritual status of the layman, not only carried with it the promise of a more thoroughgoing democracy, but actually opened the way for later developments in that field.

To this must be added the blessings which have come from his attitude toward life in general. He builded better than he knew when he announced principles which were gradually to trans-

form all life. It is not the least of his contributions as a religious leader that he actively sought to reconstruct domestic life and nurture in the spirit of the New Testament. We are glad that Luther dared to marry. We do not wish to convey the impression that he is to be praised merely for showing a courage which Captain John Smith failed to exemplify. The allusion, instead, concerns a matter of far greater moment. Through the medium of his own act as well as through his teaching the iconoclast cast a divine halo over the home. This realm of his life makes him refreshingly human. To note just one instance: "What care I if I am in debt?" he exclaims. "Katie pays the bills."

A final consideration regarding the leadership of this many-sided religious genius deserves attention. Some have seen fit to place him beside Comenius and Pestalozzi as an educator. He was much interested in a Christian educational program which would reach the masses. His attempts to do so were embodied in his popular catechism, his plans for religious instruction, his promotion of the public library. His German Bible, catechism, primary works and hymns have been the source of the profoundest educational and inspirational influence upon all succeeding generations.

V. Modern Protestantism's Debt to Luther

Properly to evaluate this debt is difficult for two reasons. Modern Protestantism is not such a definite homogeneous magnitude as its friends would like to take for granted. And Luther himself shifted his positions. We cannot so easily define in this case as the story goes about a certain gentleman, who, to his boy's question: "Father, what is a Democrat?" replied, "A Democrat, sonny, is a man who loves whisky, hates niggers, and some of them kin read." To stress the point one might even speak of two Protestantisms and two Luthers. One expression of the movement today is much like the traditionalism against which the Reformer reacted. We find people who claim to be the spiritual children of Luther still under the bondage to church, creed or sacraments, still regarding life here as a probation for the life to come, still attempting by this work or that work to earn the reward of future bliss. And Luther, the bold challenger of vested interests, the liberal radical, was quite different from the dogmatic conservative, the pliant compromiser of his later years. To put it concretely, Christianity of the twentieth century is being interpreted in terms of the modern spirit and is reproducing in general the controlling interest of the earlier and greater Luther, the intrepid knight-errant of true liberty as we find him from 1517 to about 1525. The positions which the Reformer then held, before the period of retrenchment set in, are those which are most congenial to essential modern Prot-

estantism. Although the immediate effects of the movement fell far below early expectations; though much of the old which had been energetically pushed out of the front door came back almost unchallenged into the rear door, one can say, with due reservation, that the distinctive modern threefold emphasis in religion can be traced back to Luther. The fundamental principles, and corollaries derived from them, which the Reformer did not wholly perceive, are still the guide posts of Protestantism, though they appear in a new garb consonant with the modern spirit.

In the first place, our recognition of a present salvation has, fortunately, replaced the older spirit of other-worldliness with its attendant fears and anxious hopes. Our faith in the great Beyond may be as strong as ever it was in the past. But it is associated with a joyous attitude of greater dynamic power so far as the regeneration of this world is concerned. In the second place, the gospel of liberty, as originally preached by Luther, but later submerged by the recrudescence of the old, has finally come to its own. To Lessing's cry of despair: "Oh, Luther, mighty, misjudged man! Thou hast saved us from the yoke of tradition, who will save us from the unbearable yoke of the letter?" we can reply: "We are being saved from the yoke of the letter, due partly to the work of the same Luther." The old bondage to the church, to the sacraments, to the creed, is largely a thing of the past, though men as clearly as ever see their value. A truer valuation is being given them when they are regarded in their proper aspects as means to a greater end, the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Thinking of that Kingdom leads to the most distinctive modern trend, the emphasis on social service, implied in Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Both the recognition of present salvation and the gospel of liberty logically result in the interpretation of Christianity in terms of service, as we have seen. We are increasingly coming to see that the law of the heavenly gate is the group. We are saved now, we are free now, not to indulge in selfish, blissful emotionalism, not primarily to increase our own spiritual happiness, but, in Luther's pregnant phrase, to be "reciprocally and mutually one the Christ of the other." This task and this devotion has nothing less in view than the gradual spiritual conquest of all spheres of life, home and business, church and state, not to omit international relations. All, without exception, are to be permeated, controlled, and dominated by the spirit which was in Christ. Our great charter of faith and love, the Sermon on the Mount, undergirds this transcendent vision, toward which all creation moves. It is that which links the immortal sixteenth century prophet most vitally to the present. Luther's the-

ology was essentially Christocentric, and today, Christ the Symbol, the Master, the Saviour, is the hope of the race. Christ stands for that life principle which gives us victory here and now; Christ proclaims unequivocally the true gospel of liberty; Christ challenges the world to live a life of service, to gain life by losing it in order to promote that which is greater than self.

Luther never revealed the true greatness of his soul more conspicuously than in the statement which we take from his sermon, preached at Wittenberg, in defense of his action in remaining during a dangerous pestilence. "A hundred pestilences shall not drive me away. If we die in this work of love, well for us; our last hour will be better for us than a thousand years of life."

Methodist Review.

„Das innere Leben ist und bleibt auf Erden nur ein Anheben und Zunehmen, welches wird in jener Welt vollbracht." Luther.

„Dies Leben des Glaubens, der schlichten hilfsbereiten Liebe und der Bereitschaft das Kreuz zu tragen, ist nach Luther die christliche Religion und der rechte Gottesdienst." Seeberg.

Gott der Vater als Schöpfer der natürlichen Welt und der Urstand des Menschen.

Von Professor Dr. R. H. Grützmacher.

I.

Die Schöpfung der Engel und der Welt.

Ist Gott als Vater der Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden, so ist es begreiflich, wenn die Offenbarung auch den Blick auf den Himmel und in ihm lebende geistige Wesen richtet. Die Schrift spricht von Geistern oder **Engeln** im Himmel. Für sie tritt auch die Autorität Jesu ein. Er schließt sich nicht nur aus traditionellen Gründen oder in symbolischer Bildform dem Engelglauben an. Vielmehr spricht er gerade in der Auflösung von Gleichnisreden von Engeln und tritt gegenüber ihrer sadduzäischen Leugnung für ihre Wirklichkeit ein. Der Tatbestand, daß auch in der jüdischen Religion und besonders in ihrer nachbiblischen Periode wie in andern Religionen der Engelglaube herrscht, macht die Vorstellungen der christlichen Offenbarungsreligion noch nicht unwahr. Denn die recht verstandene spezielle Offenbarung nimmt mehrfach aus der allgemeinen zutreffende Vorstellungen auf, die sie zudem kritisch reinigt und umbildet. Die Engelvorstellung kann nämlich für den Gottesglauben zur religiösen Gefahr werden, wie das im nachbiblischen Judentum und dann in der Kirche zeitweilig Tatsache geworden ist. Die Engel treten in den Vordergrund und Gott selbst in den Hintergrund; man wendet sich lieber an jene und hat mehr Vertrauen zu ihnen als zu Gott selbst. Es ist wie in manchem irdischen Königreich, wo die Hofstaaten eine größere und entscheidendere Rolle spielen als der eigentliche Monarch. Diese Zurückdrängung Gottes erfolgt aber durch die biblische Engelanschauung nicht. Gott bleibt allein im Mittelpunkt und nur er sitzt auf dem Thron; die Engel sind nur seine Diener und als seine Geschöpfe nicht minder abhängig von ihm, wie die übrige Welt. Mit der biblischen Auffassung der Engel verträgt sich eine theozentrische Religion durchaus. Auch vom Standpunkt des wissenschaftlichen Weltbildes ist die Engelvorstellung keine unmögliche und unsinnige. Je mehr sich für den modernen Menschen das Weltbild in materieller Richtung erweitert hat, er immer neue Weltkörper von ungeheurer Ausdehnung kennengelernt hat, umso näher liegt der Gedanke, daß auch die Welt des Geistes eine viel reichere ist und nicht bloß durch den geistleiblichen Menschen repräsentiert wird. Wie wir niedriger organisierte Wesen als uns selbst kennen, so erscheinen uns darum auch umgekehrt höher organisierte Geistwesen durchaus möglich. Ihr etwaiges Hineinwirken in unsre Welt, wie es die Bibel annimmt, würde das regelmäßige Geschehen ebensowenig stören wie die Wirk-

samkeit Gottes, als deren besondre Form allein die Tätigkeit der Engel erschiene. Ist so die Engelvorstellung zwar positiv biblisch begründet und wissenschaftlich möglich, so hat sie doch für die christliche Dogmatik nicht dieselbe Bedeutung wie andre Lehrstücke. Denn nach Schrift und lutherischem Bekenntnis — im Unterschied zu der Behauptung der griechischen Kirche auf dem zweiten Konzil von Nicäa im Jahre 787 — hat der Christ kein unmittelbares religiöses Verhältnis zu den Engeln, deren Anbetung ihm sogar ausdrücklich untersagt wird. Der Christ hat auch keine spezifische Erfahrung von der Wirksamkeit der Engel in dem Sinne, daß er sie bestimmt und klar von der allgemeinen direkten oder indirekten göttlichen Wirksamkeit unterscheiden könnte. Die dritte Quelle der christlichen Wahrheit, die Erfahrung, versagt bei dem Engelsglauben. Infolgedessen überläßt die Dogmatik nähere Ausführungen über Wesen, Funktion, Rangordnung der Engel der biblischen Theologie. Sie begnügt sich ihrerseits den religiösen Wert der Engelvorstellung festzustellen, der auch in Predigt und Unterricht bei gegebenem Anlaß zu betonen ist. Die Existenz einer Gott dienenden und von ihm abhängigen Geisterwelt steigert noch die Größe und Majestät Gottes. Wie der Fürst besonders machtvoll erscheint, der über eine Fülle von Dienern verschiedensten Ranges verfügt, so wird Gott auch umso größer, je zahlreicher und mannigfacher die Schar der ihm dienenden Wesen ist.

Die Existenz der Engelwelt ist aber auch geeignet, die Menschen demütiger zu machen. Diese halten sich nicht selten für unentbehrlich für Gott und glauben, daß ihre Dienstverweigerung Gott jeglicher Kreatur berauben würde. Aber auch ohne Menschen hat Gott Geister um sich, die ihm dienen, ihn preisen und anbeten. Sodann aber veranschaulicht die Engelwelt die Fülle von verschiedenen Mitteln, über die Gott verfügt, wenn er in der Welt wirken will: „Weg hat er allerwegen, an Mitteln fehlt's ihm nicht." Endlich bietet die Stellung der Engelwelt ein anschauliches Bild des heiligen und seligen Zieles, welches die Menschen erreichen sollen. Menschen und auch Kinder werden zwar niemals Engel, sondern nur den Engeln gleich in dem Sinne, daß sie, von aller Sünde und Vergänglichkeit frei, Gott dienen und darin ihre volle Befriedigung finden. **Die biblisch-kirchlich begründete Vorstellung, daß Gott der Vater und Schöpfer himmlischer Wesen ist, hat zwar keine entscheidende dogmatische Bedeutung, kann aber wohl die christliche Religion fördern.**

Ueber die **Schöpfung unsrer Welt** spricht sich eingehender in der Bibel nur das erste und zweite Kapitel des Ersten Buches Moses aus. Es handelt sich hier um keine exakte wissenschatfliche Berichterstattung über den Schöpfungsvorgang, aber auch nicht um leere Phantasien, sondern um „rückwärts gewandte Prophetie." Wie die

prophetischen Männer unter Anleitung des göttlichen Geistes in die Zukunft schauten und dabei kommende religiöse Wirklichkeit in die Bilder und Vorstellungen ihrer Zeit einkleideten, hat der Verfasser jener ersten Kapitel prophetisch in der Vergangenheit die weltschaffende Tätigkeit Gottes in den seiner Umwelt natürlichen Vorstellungen geschaut. Gerade auch durch religionsgeschichtlichen Vergleich mit andern Schöpfungsberichten, wie dem im Gilgameschepos enthaltenen babylonischen, ergibt sich der eigentlich prophetisch-religiöse Gehalt, der für die christliche Dogmatik normativ ist. Der eine Gott hat die ganze Welt geschaffen, ohne daß ihm irgend welche andre Götter oder selbständige Mittelkräfte zu Hilfe kamen. Allein durch sein Wort und seinen Geist hat er die Welt geschaffen und sich schon bei der Schöpfung als alleinigen Vater und Herrn aller Dinge erwiesen. Während alle außerbiblischen Schöpfungsberichte im letzten Grund dualistisch orientiert sind, d. h. eine außer- und unabhängig von der Gottheit bestehende Materie annehmen, welche die Gottheit nur umbildet, läßt die Bibel auch die Materie und das Chaos von Gott geschaffen sein. Infolgedessen fällt für sie auch der Weltanfang mit der Schöpfung zusammen. Es gab eine Welt erst in dem Augenblick, da Gottes Allmacht sie ins Dasein rief. Die Schöpfung vollzieht sich stufenweise nach einem bestimmten Plan und zwar so, daß ein Aufstieg vom Niedern zum Höheren stattfindet. Sein Ziel ist der Mensch. An der Schöpfung des Menschen ist Gott in ganz besonderm Maß beteiligt. Diese Gedanken bilden den bleibenden Inhalt und den Hintergrund der gesamten biblischen Vorstellung von der Schöpfung der Welt; andre Einzelzüge treten zurück, ja werden überhaupt nicht wieder oder in andern Bildern erwähnt. Diese Wahrheiten lassen sich auch naturwissenschaftlichen und philosophischen Einwendungen gegenüber aufrechterhalten, wie eine an dieser Stelle nicht zu führende apologetische Auseinandersetzung zeigen könnte. Auch das kirchliche Bekenntnis begnügt sich sowohl in der alten wie in der reformatorischen Zeit mit der kurzen Erklärung, daß Gott der allmächtige Schöpfer Himmels und der Erde sei und den Menschen samt allen Kreaturen geschaffen habe. Kann auch der einzelne Christ die Schöpfung der Welt als einen vergangenen einmaligen Vorgang nicht nacherleben, so hat er doch in der Erfahrung seiner Abhängigkeit von Gott in allen Dingen des natürlichen Lebens die erfahrungsmäßige Anknüpfung für die Gewißheit, daß Gott sein Leben geschaffen hat, wie das der ganzen Welt.

Auf Grund dieser aus Schrift, Bekenntnis, Erfahrung sich ergebenden religiösen Erkenntnisse über die Schöpfung der Welt, durch Gott den Vater, kann die Dogmatik in die Beantwortung eine Reihe besonderer Probleme eintreten. Die Schöpfung war für Gott nicht eine Notwendigkeit, zu der ihn ein Mangel oder eine Ueber-

fülle des eignen Wesens zwang, wie die emanatistischen Theorien behaupten. Sie war vielmehr eine freie Tat seines Willens, die allerdings ihren Ursprung in seinem tiefsten Wesensgrund als Vater hat. Das Ziel der Schöpfung liegt auch nicht in einem von Gott unterschiedenen Zweck, sondern in seiner Verherrlichung. Diese aber schließt in sich die Beseligung und Beglückung der Menschen und der gesamten Kreatur. Das Wesen der Schöpfung besteht darin, daß Gott seinen geistigen Ideen, die von Ewigkeit in ihm vorhanden waren, den Charakter kreatürlicher Stofflichkeit und Geistigkeit mit allen dazu gehörigen Merkmalen gegeben hat. Durch die Schöpfung ist — sei es nun gleich in fertigem Zustand, sei es in potentieller Anlage — alles das ins Dasein gerufen, was in der Welt besteht oder sich in ihr entwickelt. Auch die charakteristischen Grundformen alles kreatürlichen Daseins, Raum und Zeit, sind erst durch die Schöpfung geworden, wie immer man sich philosophisch ihr Wesen vorstellen und ihr Verhältnis zu Gottes eignem Dasein deuten möge. Für uns fällt jedenfalls die Entstehung der Welt mit derjenigen von Raum und Zeit zusammen. Weil die Welt durch Gott geschaffen ist, müssen wir sie — im Gegensatz zu allem Pessimismus und noch ohne Blick auf Unvollkommenheit, Sünde und Leid — als eine gute bezeichnen. Dagegen haben wir keinen Anlaß sie — mit dem optimistischen Philosophen Leibnitz — als die beste aller Welten zu bezeichnen, da uns jeder Vergleichsmaßstab mit einer andern Welt fehlt, wie sie Gott hätte schaffen können.

An die göttliche **Schöpfertätigkeit** schließen sich unmittelbar eine Reihe andrer Betätigungen Gottes an, die eigentlich nur für unser in zeitlicher Folge verlaufendes Denken sich von jener unterscheiden lassen. Denn die göttliche Ruhe nach der Schöpfung schließt eine stete Wirksamkeit Gottes nicht aus, ja diese bedingt ein Weiterbestehen der Welt, und nimmt den Charakter der **Erhaltung** an. Diese Erhaltung wird zur göttlichen **Weltregierung.** Sie stellt alles Geschehen in den Dienst der letzten Absichten Gottes mit der Welt und Menschheit. Gott leitet die Welt teleologisch zu dem von ihm bestimmten Ziele. Da die Absicht Gottes mit der Welt wie mit jedem einzelnen Menschen eine gute ist, gewinnt sie den Charakter der liebenden Fürsorge oder der **Fürsehung.** Alle diese Behauptungen tragen streng religiösen Charakter, sind nur für den Christen erfahrbar und glaubbar. Denn der Blick auf den rein empirischen Verlauf der Weltgeschichte und vieler einzelner Lebensschicksale scheint für das Gegenteil zu sprechen. Infolgedessen finden sich auch bei nicht christlichen Menschen starke Zweifel an Gottes Schöpfung, Regierung und Providenz. Diese lassen sich nur durch den christlichen Gottesglauben und noch tiefer durch den Versöhnungsglauben überwinden. Die christliche Schöpfungslehre findet darum ihre Vollendung erst im weiteren Fortgang der christlichen Dogmatik.

II.

Wesen und Urstand des Menschen.

Das Ziel der Schöpfung ist der Mensch. Darum ist seinem Wesen eine besondre Betrachtung zuzuwenden. Wir unterscheiden im Wesen des Menschen seine bleibenden Grundzüge und besondren Eigentümlichkeiten, die es unmittelbar nach der Schöpfung getragen haben muß. Die genauere Beschreibung des menschlichen Wesens fällt den verschiedenen Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften zu. Die Dogmatik beschränkt sich auf die Hervorhebung derjenigen Züge, die den Menschen als Geschöpf Gottes charakterisieren, und die als notwendige Voraussetzung seiner Sünde wie Erlösung in Betracht kommen. Der Mensch ist eine unauflösliche Verbindung von Leib und Seele, die weder im Sinn des Materialismus noch Spiritualismus voneinander getrennt werden können. Wenn die Schrift neben der Seele noch den Geist erwähnt, so ist darunter nicht ein dritter selbständiger Wesensbestandteil zu verstehen, sondern der Geist weist nur auf den gottverwandten Ursprung der Seele und ihre Selbständigkeit gegenüber dem Körper hin. Die Menschheit hat einen einheitlichen Ursprung und setzt sich durch Zeugung und Vererbung fort, und zwar nicht nur hinsichtlich ihres Körpers, sondern auch ihrer geistigen Seele. Dadurch wird der einzelne Mensch, der eine individuelle Sonderexistenz mit einem beharrenden Ich besitzt, zugleich in einen großen sozialen Zusammenhang physischer wie geistiger Art gestellt, er wird zum Träger von Geschichte. **Der Mensch ist mithin durch die Schöpfung zu einem geistleiblichen, individuellen, sozialen und geschichtlichen Wesen gemacht,** — alle Züge, die auch für seine Religion und Sittlichkeit, deren Verderbung aber auch Wiederherstellung von entscheidender Bedeutung sind. Zu den auf Gott zurückgehenden Wesenszüge des Menschen gehört vor allen Dingen seine Befähigung zu Sittlichkeit und Religion. Die religiöse Anlage des Menschen besteht darin, daß er fähig ist, eine Offenbarung Gottes innerlich zu erfassen und in ihr die höchste Befriedigung des durch innerweltliche Güter nicht voll zu befriedigenden Seelenbedürfnisses zu erfahren. Die ethische Anlage des Menschen besteht darin, daß er absolut verpflichtender unegoistischer Motive innewerden und sich dadurch bestimmen lassen kann, im Gewissen und in der Freiheit. **So ist der Mensch als auf Sittlichkeit und Religion angelegtes Wesen aus der Hand Gottes hervorgegangen.**

Alle bisher genannten Merkmale gehören zu den dauernden unverlierbaren Wesenszügen des Menschen, in der Sprache der alten Dogmatik zur Imago dei late dicta.* Es erhebt sich die Frage, ob der Mensch einmal alle diese Züge, insonderheit die sittlich-reli-

*) Im weiteren Sinn.

giösen allein besessen und sich dann in einem sittlich-religiös höheren Zustand als nach der Sünde befunden hat. Von einem solchen **Urstand** — freilich in sehr schlichter einfacher Form — berichtet das dritte Kapitel des ersten Buch Moses, über dessen Ursprung und dogmatische Geltung wie über den Schöpfungsbericht zu urteilen ist. Andre biblische Stellen sprechen sich nicht näher über diesen Urstand aus. Dagegen hat sich die reformatorische Lehre in Auseinandersetzung mit dem Katholizismus genauer darüber in Apologie II geäußert — bei genauerer Interpretation doch aber auch in sehr zurückhaltender Form. Infolgedessen wird die Dogmatik in Gegensatz zur Uebertreibung des Urstandes in der älteren Theologie und seiner teilweisen Streichung in der neueren einen Mittelweg einschlagen. Kann die Sünde nicht ursprünglicher Bestandteil des von Gott geschaffenen menschlichen Wesen sein, so ist ein Zustand anzunehmen, in welchem der Mensch allein die ihm von Gott gegebenen Wesenszüge besaß und diese auch ungehindert durch die Sünde sich auswirken ließ. Dadurch entstand eine religiös-sittliche Vollkommenheit. Sie wird aber nur als eine relative und noch zu steigernde zu verstehen sein. Mit einem Lutherwort als **Innocentia puerilis.** Die Lehre vom Urstand des Menschen ist der Dogmatik wesentlich als Konsequenz aus der Schöpfungslehre und als Voraussetzung der Sündenlehre. Sie hat nicht die gleiche Bedeutung wie diese beiden Grundpfeiler, stellt aber die notwendige Brücke zwischen ihnen dar.

Das Problem des Wunders.

Von P. W. Petersmann.

2. Kapitel.

Die Epigonalisierung des Wunderbegriffs: Das epigonale Wunder.

1.

Das epigonale Wunder; das rationale Wunder; das heteronome Wunder.

Wir haben versucht, das originale Wesen des Wunders zu erfassen, seinen originalen, ursprünglichen Sinn, seinen originalen Frömmigkeitsinhalt, und haben ihn gefunden im „Wunder" und spezifiziert im essentiellen Wunder des Wundervollen, des Wunderhaften unddes Wunderlichen an Gott und seiner Welt und im existentiellen Wunder des Gottes der geltenden und sich geltend machenden Wirklichkeit. Das ist sein urtürmlicher Sinn. Nun aber ist deutlich, daß die herkömmlichen, gewohnten Arten der Wunderkonzeption sich **merklich massiv entfernt** haben von diesem ursprünglichen Wesen. Die traditionelle Definition des Wunders als „Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs" ist weit fortgetrieben vom originalen Sinn des Wunders. Solche **Entfernung vom Originalen** könnte man am besten bezeichnen mit **epigonal:** es ist der Gegensatz vom Ursprung und seiner echten Ursprünglichkeit und dem Epigonischen, Nachfahrenden, Nachkömmlichen, dem Zweithändigen, dem Abgetriebenen von Quelle und Anfang weg. Wir wollen in diesem zweiten Teil von diesem **epigonalen Wunder** handeln. Wie wird der Wunderbegriff epigonal, d. h. wie kommt es, daß er sich aus dem Originalen, Ursprünglichen, von der origo, der Quelle weg entfernt? Und in welchen Formen tut er es?

Wunder, Wundererfahrung, Offenbarungserfahrung geschehen im Leben von Menschen, die ihrem Sein nach in der natürlichen, rational-sinnlichen Sphäre dieser Welt leben, die mit den Mitteln, Ausdrücken, Kategorien und Vorstellungen dieser rationalen Welt arbeiten und sich verständigen, die immer letztlich an die rational-sinnliche Art dieser Welt gebunden bleiben und so immer einen Zug in diese rational sinnliche Sphäre behalten — selbst der Asket und der Mystiker. Auch der, der das Wunder an sich echt, original erfährt. So aber tritt das Wunder als Wunderauffassung, Wunderausdruck, Wunderformulierung, als Wunderbegriff und Wundervorstellung selten ganz und rein original auf in dem Sinne, in dem wir es oben im ersten Teil versucht haben zu entfalten und zu formulieren. Es bekommt diesen **Zug, in diese Sphäre natürlichen Weltlebens hineingezogen zu werden.** Dieser Zug ist es, der **die Epigonalisierung: die Entfernung vom Originalen bewirkt.**

Das originale Wunder hat so die Tendenz, **rationales, das heißt rationalisiertes Wunder** zu werden. Im Uebrigen ist darauf zu achten, daß man den Ausdruck „rational" nicht mißverständlich oder verworren gebraucht oder hinnimmt. Er bedeutet bei fast jedem Autor etwas anders, mindestens der Nuanze nach. Er bedeutet etwas anders bei Troeltsch, etwas anders bei Otto. Er kann bedeuten die Ordnung der psychischen Erfahrungsmasse. Er kann bedeuten die begriffliche Faßbarkeit im Gegensatz zum Numinosen, zum Mysterium. Er kann auch bedeuten die logisch-ethische Weltgestaltungspflicht. Hier dagegen ist „rational" gemeint als allgemeiner Ausdruck für das Denken und Leben der natürlichen, diesweltigen, irdischen Sphäre. Indem aber das Wunder aufgefaßt und gedeutet wird in den Begriffen und Vorstellungen dieser rationalen Sphäre und in ihren Motiven verwendet wird, wird **seine charakteristische Art verschoben,** aus dem Originalen ins Epigonale (das ist die allgemeinste Formel dieser Entfernung und Verschiebung); aus dem Ursprünglich-Religiösen ins Rationale (das ist die den Inhalt der Veränderung, die Richtung der Verschiebung bezeichnende Formel); aus dem Autonomen ins Heteronome (das ist die schärfstkritische Formel, die Wert und Unwert, echt und unecht, richtig und falsch unterscheidet). Was meint es, wenn wir dies epigonale und rationale Wunder als **das heteronome Wunder** bezeichnen? Dies: daß es sein Gesetz, seinen Sinn, seine Meinung, sein Kriterium nicht mehr im ursprünglichen eigenen und eigentlichen Selbst hat, sondern gedeutet, gemessen, beurteilt wird und sich richten muß nach Gesetzen, Formen, Motiven, die von außen her kommen, von fremdher angelegt sind: eben aus dieser rationalen Sphäre. Rational werden die Erscheinungsformen, in denen man das Wunder auffaßt und definiert — und so werden sie heteronom. Rational werden die Motive, die zum Wunder führen und nach ihm trachten — und so werden sie heteronom. Rational werden die Wege, auf denen man zum Wunder zu gelangen sucht, und damit heteronom. Rational wird endlich auf Grund davon die ganze Wunderdebatte, die Streitstellung der Diskussion — und so wird auch sie heteronom. So diskutiert man über das Wunder als „Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs" um nicht mehr über den originalen Sinn des „Wunders." Nachdem wir die Tendenz des Wunders zu Epigonalisierung, Rationalisierung, Heteronomisierung so aufgewiesen haben, wollen wir daran gehen, im einzelen, an Formen, Motiven, Wegen und Problematik, diese Tendenz klarzulegen und zu spezifizieren.

2.

Die Epigonalisierung der Formen: Das naturalistische und das supernaturalistische Wunder.

Die rationale Lebenssphäre des Menschen gibt ihm den Zug,

das Wunder unter den Anschauungen dieser Sphäre zu konzipieren. Wir sprechen zunächst von den **rationalisierten Konzeptionsformen des Wunders.** Man denkt hier zunächst sofort an die supernaturalistische Bestimmung des Wunders als „Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs." Doch ist es wesentlich, sich vor Augen zu halten, daß die rationale Lebenssphäre nicht nur in dieser einen, sondern in zwei antipodischen Richtungen rationalisierend auf die Auffassung des Wunders wirkt. Sie kann zunächst wirken in der Linie der **überschießenden Rationalisierung.** Gottes Offenbarung mit seinem essentiellen Wunder der Anderheit und seinem existentiellen Wunder des wirksam sich geltend machenden Eingreifen in die Welt wird erfahren. Der rationale Mensch aber in seinem rationalen Anschauungskreis faßt dies „Wunder," dies Ungewöhnliche, Unerwartete auf und drückt es aus mit seinen rationalen Mitteln. Diese Rationalisierung fügt zum originalen Wunder, über die originale Erfahrung hinausschießend, noch etwas hinzu: die rationale Unterstreichung, Massivisierung, Uebertreibung. Diese Rationalisierung ist eine **positive,** sofern sie den Sinn der orignalen Wundererfahrung in gewisser rationaler Weise fördert, positiv zu ihr steht, sie erleichert. Der Gewohnheitskreis des natürlichen regelmäßig-gewöhnlichen Geschehens, das tagtäglich nach den Naturgesetzen abläuft, wird durch dies ungewöhnliche Eingreifen Gottes durchbrochen. Eine Ausnahme findet statt, die Gott übernatürlich, von oben und außen hereinlangend und den Gewohnheitszusammenhang aufhebend bewirkt. Daß hierin vor allem das existentielle Wunder ausgedrückt wird, ist klar. Aber auch das essentielle: vergleiche die wunderbare Geburt Jesu; vergleiche dazu auch die Geburtslegende Buddhas und die Heiligenlegenden. Dies Wunder der überschießenden Rationalisierung ist **das supranaturalistische Wunder.** Dies Wunder ist, weil gerade die primitive, historisch erste und systematisch volkstümliche Weltanschauung oder besser Weltanschauungslosigkeit solche supernaturalistische Rationalisierung ermöglicht und fördert, **das primitive Wunder.** Antipodisch steht dieser überschießenden Rationalisierung gegenüber aber **die unterdrückende Rationalisierung.** Auch sie muß — zwar als das andre Extrem — aber als von gleicher Struktur betrachtet werden. Hier ist freilich der rationale Anschauungskreis des gewöhnlichen Regelgeschehens nicht ein Motiv der Förderung, sondern der Unterdrückung des wirklichen und vollen Sinnes der originalen Wundererfahrung. Die Rationalisierung ist eine **negative.** Man könnte beide Arten der rationalisierenden Tendenzmacht mit den beiden Arten der Elektrizität, der positiven und der negativen vergleichen. Auf beiden Seiten, der naturalistischen wie der supernaturalistischen, ist das naturgesetzliche Regelgewebe des Weltverlaufs als irgendwie selbstgenug für die Kausalerklärung der Zusammenhänge, als für

ein direktes Erscheinen und Eingreifen einer göttlichen causa gar nicht mehr Platz lassend empfunden. Das ist bei der naturalistischen Auffassung klar. Aber es ist auch bei der supernaturalistischen Konzeption der Fall: das natürliche alltägliche Geschehen wird irgendwie als schon in sich geschlossen, selbständig vorgestellt, mag man auch in der supernaturalistischen Dogmatik den Begriff der „göttlichen Welterhaltung" als seine Basis nehmen. Kurzum, die rationale Sphäre des natürlichen Regelgeschehens strebt nach Emanzipation vom Gotteswirken, nach autonomer Selbstgenugsamkeit in der naturalistischen wie der supernaturalistischen Weltansicht. Man kann ein unmittelbares Erscheinen Gottes im rationalen Regelgeschehen nicht recht ausdrücken, entweder nicht adaequat oder überhaupt nicht mehr. So eben entsteht auf der einen Seite das Wunder der Ausnahme und Durchbrechung — und auf der andern Seite die abgemagerte, unterernährte, blasse Großstadtgestalt des **naturalistischen Wunderbegriffs.** Er tritt eben da leicht auf, wo die moderne Naturwissenschaft die Weltanschauung erobert hat. Es ist so **das „moderne" Wunder** — modern freilich mit Gänsefüßchen. Und es ist freilich ein Wunderbegriff mit „Gänse"-Füßchen: watschelnd, ohne Bewegungskraft, und mit mangelnder intellektueller Begabung dazu.

In der Anschauung des rationalen Weltgeschehens als des Gewöhnlichen, Notwendigen, Selbständigen bleibt für Wunder und Offenbarung Gottes nur die Wahl zwischen **Exception aus und Identifikation mit dem rational-natürlichen Geschehen.** Jenes dritte, eben das unmittelbare freie schöpferische Handeln und Erscheinen Gottes innerhalb der Ordnung der ganz und gar nicht selbstgenugsamen Welt wird aus diesem Rationalismus heraus nicht gesehen. Die **Autonomiesucht der rationalen Sphäre** mit ihrem als irgendwie selbständig und geschlossen angesehenen, gewohnten Gang bewirkt das. Eben darum ist ja auch das Wunder, die Gottesoffenbarung: „Wunder" d. h. ungewohnt, ungewöhnlich und so ein Objekt des Verwunderns. Diese Betrachtung aber würde führen in eine **Metaphysik des Wunders,** die wir um ihrer systematischen Voraussetzungen willen hier nicht entwickeln wollen. — In beiden Anschauungen ist also das Wunder in eine rationale Beziehung zur verselbständigt abgeschlossenen Gewohnheitssphäre gesetzt, das eine Mal als **Ausnahme,** das andre Mal als Verselbigung. — Drücken wir dasselbe aus nun nicht mehr gesehen von der Abgeschlossenheit und Selbständigkeit des natürlichen Lebens, sondern gesehen von dem originalen Wunder aus, wie wir es im ersten Teil beschrieben haben, so ergibt sich folgendes: das originale Wunder wird auf beiden Seiten fortgeschoben. Im Supernaturalismus wird es über die eigene Stellung einer freien Gotteserscheinung weiter hinausgeführt und schlägt ein Loch, eine Lücke, eine Ausnahme in die geregelte

ratinale Sphäre. Es nimmt über seinen freien religiösen Sinn hinaus, der voll erhalten bleibt, einen weiteren, die Grenzen überschreitenden, verschiebenden, vorstoßenden Schritt in die rationale Sphäre, als Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs. Im Naturalismus dagegen wird es aus der eigenen Stellung zurückgedrängt vor dem übermächtigen Anspruch der rationalen Welt, kausal in sich geschlossen zu sein und kein direktes Eingreifen Gottes mehr zuzulassen. So kann man hier reden von der **Reduktion und vom Regreß des originalen Wunders vor der rationalen Sphäre, und dort von der Traduktion und vom Transgreß des originalen Wunders hinüber in die rationale Sphäre.** Grenz- und Kompetenzüberschreitungen liegen in beiden Fällen vor. Das eine Mal hat nur die Wundererfahrung den erobernden Primat, das andre Mal die natürliche Regelsphäre. — Es kann nun die reduzierende Rationalisierung gehen bis auf den zusammengeschrumpften Rest eines essentiellen Wunders des Wundervollen und eines deterministisch-fatalistisch, modern-modisch geschnürten existentiellen Wunders eines Gottes, dessen weiser Plan sich in dem naturgesetzlichen Ursachennexus auswickelt. Und sie tendiert geradezu auf die naturwissenschaftliche Leugnung des Wunders. Damit aber sind wir angelangt bei den Intensitätsstufungen der Rationalisierung.

3.

Die Intensitätsstufungen der Rationalisierung beim supernaturalistischen Wunder.

Die entwickelte mächtige Rationalisierungstendenz kann wie die Elektrizität vom Schwachstrom bis zum Starkstrom wirken — in Intensitätsstufungen. Von der Unmöglichkeit des Menschen an, sich irgend anders als letztlich doch immer mit den inadäquaten rationalen Mitteln dieser Welt auszudrücken auch für die Erfahrung der Ueberwelt, kann die Rationalisierung sich stärker und stärker, voller und voller geltend machen bis ins Derbe und Apokryphe. Wir weisen zunächst solche **Intensitätsstufungen** auf **im supranaturalistischen Wunder.** Da beginnt es systematisch (natürlich nicht historisch) mit der **Rationalisierung** im engeren Sinn, der Theoretisierung, Vergedanklichung, Verwissenschaftlichung der Wundererfahrung in supernaturalistischen Theorien, von feineren bis zu gröberen. Die theologische und religionsphilosophische Wissenschaft mit ihren rationalen Erfassungsversuchen tut hier vor allem auf meist feinerem theoretischem Gebiet ihr Werk die Geistesgeschichte hindurch. Sie expliziert rational das Wunder, sie fügt es ihrer Weltansicht gedanklich ein. Ich erinnere an die aristotelische Scholastik aller Orthodoxien.

Ich erinnere an den geschichtlich mächtig fortwirkenden Wunderbegriff des Thomas von Aquino und an seine feinen systematischen Unterscheidungen. Darüber erhebt sich die Stufe der **Naturalisie-**

rung, ebenso im engeren Sinne des naturhaft Massiven, Anschaulichen, Greifbaren. Sie liegt meist auf dem Gebiet des praktischen weniger fein konzipierenden Lebens, und in die „praktische" Theologie, die diesen Bereich volkstümlich massiv genug definieren muß oder vielleicht nur nachträgliche systematische Formulierungen und Begründungen einer volkstümlich massiven Auffassung, die praktisch schon längst in Geltung steht, beizubringen hat. Die Sakramentstheorien wären hier abzuhandeln. Man merkt die Stufung deutlich etwa, wenn man von Luthers Konsubstantiationstheorie zur Transsubstantiationslehre orthoxer Scholastik weiterschreitet. Leib und Blut Christi ist bei Luther irgend „in, mit und unter" dem Brot da. Weiter wird diese Realpräsenz nicht rational expliziert. Aber in der Transsubstantiationslehre wird sie rational genau festgelegt. Die Substanz des Brotes wandelt sich in den Leib und nur die Akzidenzien des Brotes bleiben zurück. Das so festgelegte Meßwunder, aber auch die manducatio oralis et infidelium ist schon massiv. Hier wird das Wunder mehr über die rationale feinere Begrifflichkeit tiefer hinabgezogen in die sinnenfällige Begreiflichkeit. Man betrachte daraufhin einmal die Kirchenbegriffe, die Priesterbegriffe, Inspirationsbegriffe, Offenbarungsbegriffe, die Begriffe des Gotteshauses und Gottesdienstes, der Liturgie und des Ritus, die Ordinationsbegriffe und die der Weihen wie aller Sakramente — wie leicht sind sie feiner oder gröber, mehr oder weniger intensive Naturalisierungen originaler Wundererfahrungen! Ebenso aber wird man so den originalen Wesenskern dieser massivisierten Begriffe erfassen lernen auf dem Wege dieser Untersuchungen — ihre echte Wundergrundlage.

Nur an einem Beispiel soll noch deutlich gemacht werden, was die Naturalisierung des Wunders meint. Man kann Gott erfahren durch den Mund eines Menschen — ich erinnere an die biblischen Propheten. Sie sind Gottgesandte. Solche Gotteserfahrung an und durch den Propheten ist unmittelbar, und ist, nach unsern Voraussetzungen Wundererfahrung. Vor dem Propheten „entsetzt" man sich. Das originale Wunder liegt im Propheten selber. Es ist aber eine allgemeine Tatsache der Religionsgeschichte, daß Prophet und „Zeichen" im massiveren Sinn zusammen gehen oder zusammen erwartet werden. Das Volk verlangt vom Propheten ein Wunder als Ausfluß seiner Gottgesandtheit, oder die Legende rüstet ihn von vornherein damit aus. Das ist naturalisierte Divination: massivisierte Erfahrung und Anschauung des Heiligen in der Erscheinung.

Eine dritte, noch tiefere und dunklere Stufe ist die der **Apokryphisierung**. Dieser Begriff umschließt noch manches andre, z. B. auch die Epigonalisierung der Motive, neben dem was er hier bezeichnet. Hier aber bezeichnet er das Hinabsteigen und Uebergehen

des Wunders über die rational-begriffliche Erfassung und weiter über die handgreifliche Naturalisierung hinaus ins Plumpe, Ueberkompakte, Massivste, Geschmacklose, Bizarre. Afterglauben und Aberglauben regieren hier. Das Apokryphe bezeichnet mehr als den Superlativ der Rationalisierung und Naturalisierung. Es bezeichnet zugleich die Grenzüberschreitung, das Unglaubwürdige und Unechte, die Uebertreibung der Rationalisierung. Wunder im abergläubischen Sinn, Reliquien- und Heiligenlegenden aller Art spielen in diese dunkle Sphäre hinein.

4.

Die Intensitätsstufungen der Rationalisierung beim naturalistischen Wunder.

Wir haben die supranaturalistische Traduktion des originalen Wunders in den Intensitätsgraden der Rationalisierung, Naturalisierung und Apokryphisierung beschrieben. Es handelt sich nun hier, beim **naturalistischen Wunder,** darum, daß die rationale Gewohnheitssphäre, als in sich abgeschlossen, selbstgenug, den Kausalitätsbedürfnissen lückenlos genügend, die **Reduktion des originalen Wunders** bewirkt, und zwar in Intensitätsstufen, die wir analog jenen andern beschreiben können.

Auf der Stufe der **Rationalisierung** in einem weltanschaulich-religiösen Sinn ist das originale Wunder zunächst vielleicht reduziert auf das existentielle Wunder eines schöpferischen und schicksallenkenden Weltwirkens der Vorsehung. Reduziert ist hier leicht das essentielle Wunder des Wunderhaften. Immerhin kann natürlich das Element des Wunderlich-Paradoxen in der Lebensführung des Gottesschicksals vorhanden sein. Es gibt auf dieser Stufe historische und systematische Formen und Arten. Noch ein Beispiel zur Klärung. Eine liberal-rationalistische Reduktion, und damit eine rationalistische Ketzerei, ist nicht etwa die Leugnung der Jungfräulichen Geburt Jesu, sondern die Reduktion der Divination in und an Christus: Christus ist eben nicht nur ein die Frömmigkeit anregender, übernormal religiöser Mensch, sondern er ist gottgesandte Erscheinung, Botschaft und Offenbarung Gottes in diese Welt. Und er ist dies Wunder nicht nur im existentiellen Sinne, sondern auch im essentiellen: Offenbarung aus einer „andern" Welt. — Hier hin gehört auch die deistische Reduktion des Wunders auf das einmalige existentielle Wunder im Schöpfungsakt der Welt. Das große Uhrwerk ist fertiggestellt und aufgezogen. Nun läuft es mechanisch ab. Zur Entschädigung wird das essentielle Wunder des Wundervollen dieser Schöpfung gepflegt. Man vergleiche die Lieder des Rationalismus.

Eine weitere Stufe der rationalistischen Reduktion des originalen Wunders ist die **Naturalisierung.** Das existentielle Wunder der

individuellen Schicksalsleitung Gottes verkümmert rational zur stoischen Anagke, zum Fatum, zum Schicksalszwang. Deterministisch wird Gott und Naturordnung mit ihrem Kausalzusammenhang identifiziert: ein versteifter und verblaßter Ausdruck des existentiellen Wunders. Man untersuche diese Beziehungen bei Spinoza und Schleiermacher. Pantheismus aller Art, vom ästhetischen bis zum naturwissenschaftlich-monistischen, Naturalismus und Evolutionismus als autonome Weltanschauungen haben vielleicht zuletzt nur noch einen Wunderrest im Bewundern der Gesetzmäßigkeit, der kosmischen Regelhaftigkeit und der reichen schöpferischen Fülle des Universums, vielleicht auch neben diesem Rest des essentiellen Wunders einen ruinenhaften Rest des existentiellen Wunders in einem dunklen Schicksalsgefühl in einer Natur, die irgendwie schon ihren Bestand erhält.

Eine letzte dunklere Stufe aber ist die **Apokryphisierung** des originalen Wunders auch auf dieser Linie der Reduktion. Es ist die Reduktion des eigentlichen Wunders und aller Offenbarungserfahrung nicht nur in ein Wenig oder Nichts, sondern in eine utilitaristische Illusion. Das ist der apokryphe Winkel der Naturalisierung, in dem die Religionstheorien und Weltanschauungen des Illusionismus von Feuerbach bis zu verwandten pragmatistischen Erscheinungen hocken oder sich vielmehr brüsten in ihrer rationalsten sancta simplicitas.

5.

Die Motive der Epigonalisierung: Die individuellen Motive.

Wir haben jetzt einzugehen auf die Motive der Epigonalisierung, der Rationalisierung. Darauf einzugehen ist wesentlich in der Problematik des Wunders, denn von hier aus fällt manch charakteristisch heller Lichtstrahl auf die Entstehung dieser oder jener Stellung oder Kampfstellung. Das allgemeine Motiv der Rationalisierung des Wunders liegt ja von vorn herein darin, daß der Mensch hineingestellt ist in diese rationale Welt, an die er gebunden bleibt und die sein Denken dämonisch-magnetisch an sich zieht. Es handelt sich aber darum, besondre Motive, die über dies Allgemeinmotiv hinaus wirken und in die Rationalität hinabziehn, aufzuweisen. Wichtig aber ist, gleich zu beachten, daß diese besondern Motive mehr oder weniger nach beiden Seiten der Rationalisierung treiben können, nach der supranaturalistischen wie nach der naturalistischen. Wir heben hier zunächst die **individuellen,** persönlicheren Triebfedern der Rationalisierung heraus.

Da ist zunächst das der **Naivität.** Es geht darum, daß der naive Mensch, dessen Denken, Auffassung und Ausdruck nicht gelenkt und gezügelt wird durch kritische Einstellung, Bildung und Wissen, umso leichter dem Zug der Rationalisierung erliegt. So

ist der antike und mittelalterliche Mensch naiv durch seine Unkenntnis der exakten Naturgesetze. (Im Gegensatz zu der kritisch-wissenschaftlichen Einstellung der modernen Naturwissenschaft). So sind auch seine Wunderkonzeptionen naiv-rationalistisch. Naiv bezeichnet im Sinn der Reife die Altersstufe der Kritiklosigkeit und Ungeschultheit.

Ebenso aber wie auf die Konzeption des Wunders in der Form der Naturregelüberschreitung kann die Naivität auch führen in die antipodische rationalisierende Richtung, die naturalistische — bis zur naiven Leugnung des Wunders. Namentlich die popularisierte Laien-Naturwissenschaft, die Traktat-, Zeitungs- und polemisch-politische Naturwissenschaft geht diese Wege. Der Mann aus dem Volk ist eben naiv. Aber auch die einseitig tendierende, einseitig konzentrierte wirkliche Naturwissenschaft geht oft genug oder ging vor allem im Beginn ihres Emporkommens, in der Freude ihrer Entdeckungen diese Wege. Hier klärt sich die Kampfstellung von Orthodoxie und Naturwissenschaft, in weiterer Basis gesehen von Fundamentalismus und Wissenschaft, an einer Stelle: Rationalisierung auf beiden Seiten.

Ein zweites Motiv, das die allgemeine Tendenz der Rationalisierung noch kräftig verstärkt, ist das der Opposition und zumal der apologetisch-polemischen **Opposition.** Kampfstellung und Kampfruf spitzt die Parolen in die Extreme — auch hier auf beiden Seiten. Die apologetisch-polemische Orthodoxie, die den naturalistischen Rationalismus der wunderleugnenden Naturwissenschaft auf das schärfste abweisen will, wird der rationalistische Gegenfüßler in ihrer scharfgeprägten supernaturalistischen Formulierung. Aber das wird schon der, der einfach gegenüber der Gewohnheitsregelsphäre des Rationalen **antirational** seine Wundererfahrung festhalten will — gerade in der **Stärke** seiner Wundererfahrung, die den **Primat** hat. Ein solches Element der Opposition ist ja irgendwie bei jedem „Wunder" vorhanden, das als Ereignis anders ist als die Gewohnheitssphäre und deshalb verwundern macht. Der Begriff der „Ausnahme von der Regelsphäre des rationalen Lebens" ist ja der Ausdruck der Außergewöhnlichkeit. Wer aber so der Skylla zu entgehen sucht, verfällt der Charybdis. Und ebenso die apologetisch-polemische Naturwissenschaft: im Angriff auf die supernaturalistisch geformte Rechtgläubigkeit versteift sie sich im naturalistischen Rationalismus.

Ein drittes Motiv, das allen andern irgendwie als das **tiefreligiöse Interesse an der Heilswirklichkeitsgewißheit** unterliegt, ist das des **Realitätsinteresses.** Das Interesse an der Wirklichkeit und Objektivität des erfahrenen Wunders führt zur rationalisierenden Explikation und Versteifung. Namentlich die Sakramentswunder haben darunter zu leiden. In dieser Linie wird Luther gegenüber den Täufern und Zwinglianern zur seltsam rationalen Wunder-

theorie und jenen bekannten massiven Behauptungen getrieben: aus dem Interesse an der objektiven Wirklichkeit der Gegenwart der Offenbarungsgnade, des realen Christus im Abendmahl. Er steht mit tiefem religiösem Heilsinteresse in Opposition gegen symbolische Auffassungen. Das Realitätsinteresse ist auch das tiefste religiöse Interesse hinter der polemischen Opposition des Fundamentalismus gegen den verpönten wissenschaftlichen, zu Natur- und Geschichtswissenschaft mit ihren immanenten rationalen Erklärungsprinzipien anscheinend überlaufenden Liberalismus. Anderseits hat auch die „pure" Naturwissenschaft ihre Realitätsinteresse: das der empirischen Naturgesetzlichkeit. So entsteht der Kampf um die Jungfrauengeburt. Auf orthodoxer Seite steht das Interesse an der objektiven Realität des göttlichen „Wunders," das uns Menschen in Jesus Christus erschienen ist. Auf naturwissenschaftlicher Seite steht das Interesse an der objektiven Realität der ungebrochenen Naturordnung. Frei von der Rationalisierung wäre allein eine Konzeption dieses „Wunders," in Jesus, die beide Realitäten verbinden kann. Eine Konzeption, die allein interessiert ist an der Objektivität und Wirklichkeit des reinen geoffenbarten „Wunders" in Christo — dessen rational-empirische, naturwissenschaftliche Form ihr letztlich gleichgültig ist. Sie mag sie getrost einer ehrlich und echt wissenschaftlichen Naturwissenschaft überlassen.

Ein viertes verstärkendes Motiv ist **der rationale Wissenschaftstrieb.** Er ist ja gewissermaßen der in Feinkultur charakteristisch durchgeführte, zugespitzte Hang, alle Erfahrungen in möglichst einfache logisch-rationale, gesetzliche Dank- und Ausdrucksformen zu bringen. Und gerade dieser Trieb ist geschichtlich besonders wirksam geworden, in der Geschichte der abendländischen Theologie, zumal in der kirchlich-wissenschaftlichen Fixierung der ekklesiastischen Wunder, der Sakramente. Ich erinnere an die scholastische Formulierung der Transsubstantiation: die wissenschaftliche Formulierung des Erfahrungswunders der realen Gegenwart Christi im Abendmahl. Ich erinnere auch an die hellenischen wissenschaftlichen Fixierungen der Wundererfahrung im trinitarischen und christologischen Dogma. Die orthodoxe „Wissenschaft" eben formuliert ja auch das Wunder rational-supernaturalistisch als „Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs." Aber auch die Naturwissenschaft und Weltwissenschaft (Geschichtswissenschaft, Psychologie usw.) überhaupt erliegt zu leicht dem Hang, das Welt- und Naturgeschehen unter ihre rationalen Gesetzesformeln zu bringen und dann zu glauben, es ganz und vollständig in diesen rationalen Formeln der Naturregeln, der psychologischen Gesetzmäßigkeit, der natürlichen Kausalitäten erschöpft und erklärt zu haben. In beiden Lagern ist nicht gesehen, daß die rationale Formulierung der Wissenschaft die Tatsachen- und Erfahrungswelt nur bis zu einer geringen, oberflächlichen Tiefe, und

nur in ganz allgemeinen Regeln des Geschehens erfassen und formen kann. Der rationale Wissenschaftstrieb sollte sich kritisch seiner Grenzen bewußt werden — auf beiden Seiten. Dies aber führt schon hinein ins Gebiet der Apologetik.

Ein letztes individuelles Motiv ist die **Schwäche und Mattheit des Erfahrens**, die den Mangel der originalen Echtheit fördert und den rationalen Tendenzen mehr und leichter Spielraum gibt. Die wenigsten Menschen sind Propheten, Heilige, Gottesmänner. Offenbarung und Wundererfahrung dringen nicht immer in das tiefe Zentrum des Erlebens, Lebens und Denkens. Sie bleiben oft am Rand, peripherisch. Hier handelt es sich dann vor allem um den Mangel der Eindruckstiefe der Wundererfahrung, die den Primat des Wunders vor der irdisch-natürlichen Regelerfahrung bewirken würde. Diese Tendenz findet sich eben zumal auf der naturalistischen Seite. Ebenso aber kann sich die Schwäche des Erfahrens äußern im Mangel seiner Reinheit und Klarheit. Die rational explizierenden Tendenzen mischen sich auch in dieser Hinsicht leichter ein. Und das geschieht durchaus im Supernaturalismus, wenn auch das Wunder dort den echt religiösen Primat vor der Naturerfahrung hat. Diese Erfahrungsschwäche aber kann kümmerlich werden bis zum Mangel originaler Erfahrung und führt zur Uebernahme, zur epigonalen Tradition. Das aber bringt uns über die individuellen Motive hinaus in die Sphäre der sozialen Motive.

6.

Die Motive der Epigonalisierung: Die sozialen Motive.

Der Mensch ist nicht nur ein Individuum und besonders auf dem Gebiet unsrer Untersuchungen nicht nur nach der Seite der individuellen, persönlichen Motive zu betrachten. Er ist zoon politikon, Glied der **Gesellschaft**. Er steht **in soziologischen Zusammenhängen**, die ihn beeinflussen in allerlei Weise. Er steht in solchen Gesellschaftszusamenhängen in der Breite der Gegenwart wie der Länge der Geschichte. Es ist nun von vornherein wesentlich, zu sehen, daß dies Hineingestelltsein in die Gesellschaft die rationalisierenden Züge des Individuums bestärkt. Der Mensch ist Glied einer Menge, die gleich ihm oder mehr als er selber dem Zug zur Rationalisierung, zum Leben und Aufgehen in der natürlichen Welt und ihren Anschauungsformen und Regeln unterliegen. Die besonderen sozialen Motive der Rationalisierung sind in ihrer Eigenart nun zu entwickeln.

Der individuellen Naivität entspricht hier die allgemeinere und stärker und massiver rationale **soziologische** Naivität in Weltanschauungslosigkeit (primitiv), Weltanschauung (orthodox, kirchlich, popular-naturwissenschaftlich), Zeitgeist rationaler Art. Die Ge-

sellschaft als ganze ist naiv-unkritisch. Sie drängt zum unkritischen Uebernehmen, indem sie zugleich noch mehr massivisiert. So entsteht von dieser Seite aus gesehen der feste Gemeinsamkeitskomplex für Denken und Handeln in Sitte, Ethos und Weltanschauung. Die Originalität der individuellen Wundererfahrung läuft immer Gefahr, in dieser Gesellschaftssphäre unterzugehen, in sie einbezogen zu werden, säkularisiert zu werden. Die starre soziologische Objektivität verformt die Subjektivität des Einzelnen nach ihrem Bild. Erziehung, Bildung, Aufwachsen geschieht ja in dieser Gesellschaftssphäre, die zunächst die Begriffe, Anschauungen, Kriterien gibt. Diese aber sind mehr oder minder rational: massa perditionis.

Neben der Naivität hat vor allem **die Schwächlichkeit und Mattheit des Erfahrens** — oder gar sein Mangel überhaupt — den Hauptplatz in der **soziologischen** Reihe. Offenbarung, Wunder, Religion wird so mehr rational verhärtet und versteift, weil eben kein original echtes und starkes Wundererfahren der massiv-rationalen Tendenz die Wage hält. Der Protestantismus aller Art entsteht aus dem Protest des individuellen originalen Erfahrens gegen den epigonalen Komplex der Menge.

Aus diesen beiden Motiven, aus der **Naivität und Erfahrungsschwäche der gesellschaftlichen Masse** bestimmt sich das eigentliche soziale Motiv: das der **Tradition,** des **Traditionskomplexes.** Erfahrungsschwäche und Naivität bestimmen die große Menge der Gesellschaft, von den Erst- und Originalerfahrern zu übernehmen und das Uebernommene immer rationalisierter weiterzugeben. Wir reden hier von dieser epigonalisierenden Seite der Tradition, nicht von der Seite der Notwendigkeit der sozialen Weitergabe der geschichtlich einmaligen Offenbarung. Tradition in diesem Sinn ist **naive Uebernahme.** Sie ist kritiklose Zweithändigkeit. Den gesellschaftlichen Prozeß dieses gesellschaftlichen Uebergehens könnte man nach den beiden möglichen Komplexringen in die Breite der Gegenwart, des Umkreises bezeichnen als **Popularisierung** und in die Länge der Geschichte, der Nachfolge und Nachfahrenschaft bezeichnen als **Epigonisierung** der Religion, Offenbarungs- und Wundererfahrung. So bildet sich Kirche, Zeitgeist, Weltanschauung der Zeit. Uns geht hier vor allem an **die kirchliche Tradition** als charakteristisches soziales Motiv der Epigonalisierung des Wunderbegriffs.

Was diese Tradition und ihre Wunderkonzeption auszeichnet, ist einmal ihre **volksmäßig massive Rationalisierung,** ihre Verhärtung. Volks- und Völkerpsychologie haben hier ihr Untersuchungsfeld. Man vergleiche und analysiere Wunderlegenden, Wandermythen, Heiligengeschichten, Kirchenbegriffe, Sakramentsbegriffe. Man analysiere die Gestaltungen der religiösen Phantasie und die

Erzeugnisse apokrypher Mirakelsucht. Man vergleiche das Dogma von der Unfehlbarkeit des Papstes. Einfach, schlicht, kompakt und konkret, faßlich und handgreiflich wird das Wunder. Epigonische Zeiten sind reicher an äußeren Mirakeln (vergleiche die Geschichte des Buddhismus). Die „apokryphen" Schriften erscheinen chronologisch nach den „kanonischen" Schriften, durchaus nicht zufällig. Auf die Prophetie mit ihrer originalen Botschaft folgt die Apokalyptik mit ihrer rationalisierenden massiven Phantastik.

Ein weiteres, das bemerkenswert ist, ist die **Stabilisierung** der Tradition, ihre unelastische Verfestigung, ihre Tenazität in Inhalt und Formen. Man denke an die starren Ueberlieferungen der Orthodoxien mit ihrem konservativen Erhalten derselben Lehrformulierungen. Man denke an die katholischen Kircheninstitutionen (Messe, Sakramente). Man vergleiche auch die Ritualität der griechischen Liturgie. Man vergleiche das Gebiet der Magie mit ihrem genauem Konservieren der Formeln. Diese **Institutionalisierung und Doktrinalisierung** des Wunders ergibt sich klar aus dem Heilsgewißheitsinteresse, dem Wirklichkeitsinteresse, das sowohl die rationale Handgreiflichkeit wie dieses genaue Feststellen und Festhalten der Tradition bewirkt.

Ein drittes ist die **Autorisierung** der Tradition, die **Legalisierung und Dogmatisierung** aus den ganz gleichen religiösen Gründen. Man will das Wunder und den rechten Weg zu ihm festhalten, autoritativ fixieren und konservieren. Das Wunder geht über in die Sphäre des Kirchenrechts, und der Begriff der kirchlichen Orthodoxie tritt in Kraft.

Ein viertes Moment der Traditionalisierung des Wunders ist seine **Sakralisierung**. Die Autorität der Tradition ist letzlich sakraler Natur. Die massive, stabile, autoritative Wunderüberlieferung — sie ist geweiht, geheiligt um des göttlichen Charakters ihres Wunderinhalts willen, mehr aber noch weil sie traditionell-garantiehaft das Wunder in seiner Offenbarungs-Urform weiterträgt in die Gesellschaft. Sie erhält eine heilige Unantastbarkeit.

Aus einem Prinzip, dem Heilsrealitätsinteresse, das ganz kompakt sich ausdrückt bei den rationalen Epigonen, stufen diese vier Gesichtspunkte der machtvollen sozialen Motivation: der **Traditionalierung des Wunders,** auf sich. Von hier aus wird der orthodoxe, fundamentalistische Wunderbegriff erst ganz klar und verständlich: die biblischen Wunder und die zäh festgehaltene Tradition ihrer naiv-primitiven Konzeptionen; das Dogma der Trinität und Christologie in seiner heiligen Tenazität; die Schrift selber und ihre Inspiration wie der ganze handfeste Biblizismus in diesen massiven, stabilen Formen und ihrer autoritativen, sakralen Unantastbarkeit.

7.

Die Epigonalisierung der Motive zum Wunder: die heteronomen Motive.

Wir haben bisher gesprochen von der Epigonalisierung der Formen, der Konzeptionen, der Auffassungen und Formulierungen des Wunders und den Motivationen dieser Epigonalisierung individueller und sozialer Art. Wir reden jetzt von der Epigonalisierung der Motive; denn auch hier kann die Epigonalisierung eintreten. Das Wunder hat seinen Sinn, seinen Zweck in sich selber: es hat den **religiösen Sinn der Gottesoffenbarung, der Gottesgemeinschaft, des Heils.** Das Wunder und die Offenbarung bringen Gott und das Heil. So ist auch **das originale Motiv,** das **zum Wunder** drängt, **das religiöse Motiv der Suche Gottes und des Heils im Wunder selber.** Dieses Motiv aber wird **rationalisiert.** Der Mensch der rationalen Lebenssphäre ist es gewöhnt, alle Dinge zu seinen Zwecken zu benutzen. So auch das Wunder. **Noch kann der Zweck ja religiös** sein: die Erlangung der himmlischen Seligkeit. Aber das Wunder selber (etwa das Sakrament) kann benutzt werden lediglich und rein als Mittel zu diesem Zweck. Es kann alle Spur des religiösen Selbstzwecks verlieren, der soweit in ihm liegt, als immer Gott im Wunder sich zur Gemeinschaft bietet. Das Heilsmittel wird nur mediatorisch, nur als Uebergang gebraucht. Wir können das nennen **die mediatorische Heteronomie.** Oft verbindet sich in der Praxis mit ihr der magische Heilsweg. Das Gebet ist Gottesumgang und Wunder. Es in irgendeinem Sinn als gutes, satisfaktorisches Werk und nicht als Gottesverkehr zu verwenden, ist ein heteronomes Motiv, das hier hergehört. Ich erinnere an Seelenmessen und Rosenkranzgebete. Auch nur daran, daß man die Sakramente als Medizin der Unsterblichkeit benutzen könnte, oder versuchen könnte, sich in solchen Mitteln den Himmel zu erwerben oder mit ihnen ihn sich gar zu verdienen. Der Ausdruck „Heilmittel" schon hat eine feine Verführungmacht in dieser Richtung. — Ebenso behält gewisse religiöse Zwecke **die apologetische Heteronomie,** die Benutzung des Wunders als Bestätigungs- und Beweiswunder. Das Wunder wird lediglich demonstratives „Zeichen." Nicht Heilssuche drängt zum Wunder als der Gottesoffenbarung des Heils, sondern Beweissuche zur Verteidigung und Durchsetzung der Offenbarungswahrheit in der nichtgläubigen Welt. Aus der Offenbarung ist Bestätigung geworden. Die religiöse Intention, die den Selbstzweck des Wunders einfach überspringt, richtet sich hier nach unten, so wie sie sich vorher nach oben zum Himmel richtete. Die rationale Lebenssphäre mit ihrer Benutzung der Dinge als Mittel um ihrer rationalen demonstrativen Beweissuche und Beweismethode macht sich hier geltend im religiösen Motivkreis.

Und so wie sich oben leicht mit der Heteronomie der magische Weg verband, so hier eben die supernaturalistische Form der Wunderkonzeption. Rationalismus und Apologetik aller Zeiten haben das Wunder so verwandt. Ich erinnere an die Wunderverwendung auf christlichem Geistesboden von dem altchristlichen Rationalismus der Apologeten an bis zur rationalistischen Apologetik der deistischen Kontroverse.

Eine kräftigere Rationalisierung und Heteronomisierung aber liegt vor, wenn auch die **Zwecke selber rational** werden, um derethalben man zum Wunder drängt. Der natürliche Mensch, konzentriert auf das natürliche Leben, mißbraucht das Wunder zur Befriedigung rational natürlicher Bedürfnisse. Wir wollen einige wesentliche Heteronomien dieser Art aufreihen.

Zunächst **die säkulare Heteronomie.** Sie steht in gewisser Weise dem originalen Motiv noch am nächsten, sofern sie ihren Zweck noch irgendwie im Wunder selber findet. Aber dieser Zweck ist säkularisiert, verweltlicht. Der Selbstwert des Wunders dient nicht mehr zur Befriedigung der Heilsbegierde, sondern mehr zur Befriedigung weltlicher Schaulust und Neugier, Spiel- und Theaterlust. Das Wunder wird Genußwunder. Die Wunder der Magier, dieser epigonischen Gottesmänner und geistlichen Seiltänzer, gelten mehr als Kunststücke eines Theatron. Die Mirakelsucht des Volkes hat immer ein solches Element in sich. Und die Motive des Spiritismus sind hier bezeichnend - - nicht zuletzt das sensitive Gruseln des Tischchenrückens. Die Motive dieser modernsten Ersatzreligion sind ganz und gar nicht religiös, sondern entspringen metaphysischer Neugier. Es ist, freilich in apokrypher Vergeistlichung, derselbe Trieb, der die Großstadtkinos füllt. Freilich reichen die spiritistischen Motive mit langen Wurzelfasern schon ins nächste Gebiet.

Das ist das Gebiet der **eudämonistischen Heteronomie.** Sie verwertet das Wunder zum Wohlleben auf dieser Welt. Sie ist die Fortsetzung der säkularen Heteronomie, sofern schon im Schauwunder ein eudämonistisches Element steckt. Sie hat eine Stiefverwandtschaft zu dem religiösen Motiv darin, daß die weltliche Eudämonie (Heilung) das verweltlichte Heil gewissermaßen darstellt, und darin, daß auch im religiösen Motiv der Himmelsucht ein eudämonistisches Element stecken kann. So ist die Wundersehnsucht der Apokalyptiker oft genug mit eudämonistischen Momenten verbunden, und ebenso die der Mysterienreligionen. Die eudämonistischen Wunder im engeren Sinn der Bezogenheit auf diese rationale Welt beginnen mit den Wundern, die man zu Heilungszwecken sucht oder zu Hilfen aus der Not, Errettungen aller Art. Sie endigen ganz grob in der Benutzung von Reliquien gegen Krankheiten, von Amuletten die hieb- und stichfest machen, in Astrologie, Horo-

skopie, Orakeltum und Divinationen aller Art vor großen Unternehmungen, in Zauberei, Wahrsagerei und Magie, primitiver wie moderner. Die Motive der „Christian Science" liegen wohl nur zu leicht in dieser Linie. Das aber vielleicht erklärt gerade auch den großen Zulauf, den die „Christian Science" hat — wie auch die katholische Kirche. Die große Masse erliegt immer dem Zug der Rationalisierung, nicht nur in der Form, sondern auch im Motiv.

Zum dritten dann **die szientifische Heteronomie.** Das Wissenschaftsinteresse drängt zum Wunder und bemächtigt sich seiner als Objekt der Wißbegier und Forschungslust. Wir haben hier die Analogie zur säkularen Heteronomie des Neugierwunders auf höherer intellektueller Stufe. Nicht Heilinteresse treibt, sondern Weltwissenschaftsbelange, die das dunkle, rätselhafte Gebiet des Wunders reizt zur Explikation. Ein solches Motivelement steckt nur zu leicht in aller Religionswissenschaft. Vergleiche hier die Spitzfindigkeiten und gelehrten Streitigkeiten der Scholastik.

Zum Schluß **die philosophische Heteronomie.** Das Weltanschauungs- und Welterklärungsinteresse im großen Stil einer metaphysischen Theoretik und Anschauung ist die Treibekraft. Es ist der Trieb der gedanklichen Weltbeherrschung. Diese Heteronomie vollendet die szientifische in genialer Höhe. Primitive Philosophie setzt mythologische Schöpfungswunder ein, um ihre naiven Weltentstehungshypothesen durchzuführen. Man vergleiche die Theogonien und Kosmogonien in der Geistesgeschichte. Man vergleiche die Spekulationen etwa der Gnosis und Kabbala bis zu Boehme und Schelling, soweit man das philosophische Interesse kosmischer Metaphysik und nicht das praktische Interesse der Heilslehre in Betracht ziehen will.

Die Epigonalisierung des Weges zum Wunder: Die subjektivistischen und die objektivistischen Verkümmerungen.

Wir haben die Rationalisierung der Konzeptionsform des Wunders und die der Motive zum Wunder besprochen. Wir haben noch kurz zu skizzieren die Rationalisierung des Weges zum Wunder. Der originale Weg zum Wunder ist, das leuchtet ein, **die eigene (subjektive) und wirkliche (objektive) Erfahrung des Wunders.** Wir machen das klar am protestantischen Heilsweg. Luther stellt das „sola fide," „allein durch den Glauben" und „sola gratia," „allein durch die Gnade" ins Zentrum. Der Glaube stellt durchaus fest die Eigenheit, die persönliche, subjektive Autonomie der Erfahrung und ihre seelische Tiefe: der Mensch muß selber die experientia fidei haben. Die Gnade stellt fest die Wirklichkeit einer echten Erfahrung eines realen objektiven Wunders: Gott allein kann das Wunder herantragen an den Menschen. Der Mensch

kann von sich selber aus nichts dazu tun — als Gott tun lassen. Er kann nur abwarten. Gnade und Glaube aber haben ihren Weg am „Wort," dem objektiv-positiven, wirklich einmal gegebenen und also gewissen und personal-klar-verständlichen Ort der Offenbarung. Das gegebene „Wort" ist also einmal eine Zuspitzung des Gnadenprinzips: die Wirklichkeit, Objektivität der Offenbarung ist stärker verbürgt. Es ist als das klare Wort ebenso eine Zuspitzung des Glaubensprinzips: die subjektive Erfahrung, das wirkliche eigene Konzipieren ist ebenso stärker verbürgt. Die **Objektivität** und die **Subjektivität** des Wunders ist so vereint: **Wundererfahrung und Wunderereignis.**

Der Heilsweg zum Wunder, zur Offenbarung ist mannigfach epigonalisiert, rationalisiert, heteronomisiert — wir haben diese Begriffe und die Motivationen ja schon oben näher erklärt. Der Heilsweg bleibt irgendwie im National-Natürlichen wie im Sand stecken und erreicht die wirkliche Wundererfahrung nicht. Er verkümmert rational. Und zwar sind diese Verkümmerungen des Weges Verkümmerungen der subjektiven wie der objektiven Seite der Wundererfahrung. Beide Arten dieser Verkümmerungen wieder haben als Hauptmotiv das Verlangen nach Heilsrealitätsgewißheit. Nur sind die Gewißheitskriterien antipodisch. — Sprechen wir zunächst von der **subjektivistischen Verkümmerung** des Weges: der Verkümmerung der objektiven Seite. Der Ton liegt hier auf der Subjektivität und ihrem selbsteigenen und autonomen Erfahren. Aber die Realität, das objektive Wunderereignis findet nicht statt. Bestimmte naturwissenschaftliche Weltanschauung will ja das Transzendente gar nicht erreichen. Philosophie, Metaphysisches Denken wollen es erreichen auf ihrem intellektuell-theoretischen Weg, mögen aber stecken bleiben in der Subjektivität ihrer Hypothesen, Theorien und Systeme. Die Mystik mit der klaren Stufenschematik ihres psychologisch durchgeführten Heilsweges mag enden in der psychologischen Illusionistik von Einbildungen — eine praktische Phantastik neben der theoretisch-philosophischen. Der subjektive innere Pol ist da, die Wundererfahrung — der objektive Pol mag fehlen: das Wunderereignis.

Auf der andern Seite **die objektivistische Verkümmerung:** die Verkümmerung der subjektiven Seite. Die Objektivität, Realität der Wunderereignisse glaubt man festzuhalten auf dem Weg der Tradition. Man überliefert die Urform oder angebliche Urform eines wirklichen Wunderereignisses, schematisiert sie und gibt sie aus als den objektiven Heilsweg. Von hier aus fällt systematisch erhellendes Licht auf die Entstehung von Kultus und Ritus. Man betont den objektiven äußerlichen formalen Pol. Der Katholizismus gibt hier ein Arsenal von Anschauungsstoff. Die Objektivation kann auf theoretischem Feld in der Doktrinalisierung und Dogma-

tisierung; sie kann auf praktischem Gebiet in der Institutionalisierung und Ritualisierung des Wunders geschehen. Die objektive Weganweisung selber hat Geltungsstufen: von der Empfehlung objektiver Formen (Kultmystik) bis zur autoritativ exklusiven Bindung an sie im Sinn der Heilsnotwendigkeit (das katholische: extra ecclesiam nulla salus). Zugleich wird um der festen und unbedingten Objektivität willen der subjektive Pol weniger oder mehr zurückgedrängt. Und auch diese Zurückdrängung des Subjektiven hat entsprechende Intensitätsstufen. Es kann Subjektivität im vollen Sinn erwartet werden (Mystik, Luthers Glaube bei Wort und Sakrament). Es kann eine resthafte Subjektivität erwartet werden, eine halbe, verkümmerte Subjektivität: ein bloßer doktrineller assensus, eine dogmatische intellektive Zustimmung zum Dogma, eine fides dogmatica oder historica; bis zum autoritativen Gehorsamsakt der Anerkennung des kirchlichen Dogmas. Der „Köhlerglaube" aber ist schon Glaubensmagie. Die volle Ausscheidung der Subjektivität in der Mechanik der Magie mit ihrem puren äußerlichen ex opere operato ist hier das extreme Ende.

9.

Die Epigonalisierung der Wunderproblematik.

Wir sind am Ende. Wir haben die Untersuchung der Motive der Epigonalisierung schon durchgeführt bei der Untersuchung der Epigonalisierung der Formen. Sie sind für die Epigonalisierung der Motive zum Wunder und des Weges zum Wunder ähnlich. Worauf wir zum Abschluß der **Explikation des epigonalen Wunders** noch einmal hinweisen wollen, ist **die Epigonalisierung der ganzen Wunderproblematik und Wunderdiskussion,** deren Ursachen aus dem Vorgehenden klar liegen. Statt daß die Wunderproblematik forsche nach dem urtümlichen, originalen religiösen Sinn des „Wunders," und von ihm aus feststelle den originalen religiösen Sinn der traditionellen Wunder, sei es der biblischen, sei es der sakramentalen — statt dessen verläuft sie von vornherein in der epigonalrationalen Sphäre selber. Sie arbeitet von vornherein mit dem Wunderbegriff der „Durchbrechung des Naturzusammenhangs." Und sie kämpft von vornherein für oder gegen die biblischen Wunder von Jungfrauengeburt, Auferstehung, Himmelfahrt, Wasserverwandlung und Erweckung des Lazarus. Diese ganze Fragestellung ist zunächst falsch, unecht, zweithändig. Es ist die Aufgabe der Theologie, zuerst die Fragestellung selber zu **re-originalisieren.** Nur solche Re-Originalisierung bringt die Klarheit des Problems erst einmal, und gewiß bald mehr: das Durchschauen der Epigonalisierungen. Ein Dienst in dieser Richtung — das war das Ziel dieser Gedankengänge.

10.

Der Protest der originalen Erfahrung gegen die Epigonalisierungen.

Nicht ein Beweis, aber eine Beleuchtung des Ganzen unsrer Darlegungen wird es sein, wenn wir darauf acht geben, wie **die originale Religiosität** sich wendet gegen alle Art der Epigonalisierung des Wunders.

Zunächst leben die großen originalen Frommen und Gotterfahrer nicht vom Wunder im epigonalen Sinn. Die Propheten sind meist ohne Mirakel. Ihre Gotteserscheinungen und Gottestaten geschehen in den zeitgeschichtlichen Ereignissen. Mirakel sind ein Charakteristikum der flacheren Volksfrömmigkeit, der Religion zweiter Ordnung. Luther und Protestantismus sind ohne (außerbiblische) äußere Wunder im traditionell-epigonalen Sinn. Und Luther hat keine eigentliche Wundertheorie.

Freilich sind auch bei den großen Gotterfahrern Epigonalisierungsmomente vorhanden. Aber diese sind doch nur peripherische, nicht zentrale Phänomene bei ihnen. Und sie erklären sich oft genug, zumal wenn sie stärker auftreten, als aus besonderen Motiven entstanden (Naivität, Opposition). Einen gewaltigen Einfluß haben die sozialen Motive. Auch die originalen Frommen stehen in Gesellschaftszusammenhängen, in deren Weltanschauung, vor allem in Traditionen (Biblizismus, die biblischen Wunder der protestantischen Orthodoxie). Wesentlich aber ist, daß oft genug erst die Epigonen die Epigonalisierung heranbringen an den originalen Meister (Legende, Mißdeutungen wie beim Jona-Zeichen, Materialisierungen, Steigerungen rationalisierender Art: man vergleiche die Steigerungen von den Synoptikern zu den Apokryphen Evangelien). In der Regel aber und wesentlich wenden sich die großen originalen Gott- und Wundererfahrer kritisch protestantisch gegen die Epigonalisierungen. So Jesus gegen die „Zeichen"-Forderungen. Das Jona-Zeichen ist das echte: die gewaltige Predigt. So **Luther** gegen die Epigonalisierungen des Katholizismus. Er wendet sich gegen den scholastischen Rationalisierungtrieb und gegen ihre metaphysische Einstellung. „Trinität" lautet ihm kalt metaphysisch. Er ist sich des symbolischen unrationalen Charakters der dogmatischen Ausdrücke bewußt. Wir müssen sie „wol baden und waschen," meint er. Ebenso wendet er sich gegen die apokryphe Wunderwissenschaft der Astrologie und der Zeichen. Er bedarf keiner apologetischen Wunder. Der Glaubende wird durch die Erfahrung des Glaubens genug gewiß. „Die Wunder meiner Lehre sind die Erfahrungen (experientiä), die ich der Auferweckung von Toten vorziehe." Wort und innere Offenbarung sind Wunder genug. Luther, aus originalem Instinkt, mißtraut den äußeren Wundern. Er wünscht sich

nicht Visionen und Träume und dergleichen. Die epigonalen Wunder, die der Katholizismus präsentiert, mögen wohl leicht Teufelswerk sein oder Betrug. Luther wendet sich strikt gegen die ganze populäre Wundersucht seiner Zeit. Wenn man die sogenannten Wunder untersuchen würde, dann würden sie schon bald aufhören. Gottes Wort ist das Kriterium der Religion und Offenbarung, nicht äußere Wunder. Wort und Glaube aber, diese inneren Wunder sind viel größere Wunder als alle äußeren, die dagegen „eitel geringe und fast kindische Wunder" sind. Das Predigtamt tut die größeren Wunder, als ein Gottesinstrument, das Wort zu treiben. „Ob's nicht leiblich geschicht, so geschicht's doch geistlich in der Seelen, da es viel größer ist." Gottes wunderbare Offenbarung in seiner Natur, im regelmäßigen Werk seiner Schöpfung, sind größer als die äußerlichen Wunder der Unregelmäßigkeiten in der Natur. Gott läßt das Korn wachsen aus Sand und Stein, und das ist ein größeres Wunder, als daß er Tausende mit den sieben Broten gespeist hat. Nur wir achten nicht auf diese Wunder. Und Luther wendet sich gegen den rationalisierten sakramentalen Heilsweg des Katholizismus. Und man vergleiche nur Luthers wunderliche Paradoxien gegenüber den glänzenden rationalen Demonstrativ-Wundern des Katholizismus. Das Wunder bei Luther in dieser Linie ist wahrlich nicht rational-apologetischer Art. Es ist nicht rationale Beglaubigungshilfe für den Glauben — es ist vielmehr, rational gesehen, Glaubenshindernis. Das „Wunder" steht auf schärfster Spitze. Wir sehen, wie in Luther und Katholizismus originales und epigonales Wunder einander gegenübertreten — mit dem Protest des Originalen gegen das Epigonale.* Wir haben die Aufgabe heute, wie immer, in diesem Sinn nach allen Seiten Protestanten zu bleiben — oder zu werden!

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*) Vergl. zu dem Angeführten Dis. 140; Dis. 602. Wei. 30. 2, 672. Erl. 12, 218. Wei. 30. 2, 533. Wei. 30. 2, 534. 28, 226. 41, 19. 45, 531.

EDITORIALS

IS PROTESTANTISM ON THE WANE?

The Caholic Church has for a long time been proclaiming that Protestantism finds itself in a state of disintegration. This condition is self-imposed. it says; for while the Catholic Church claims to have the truth, the absolute truth, Protestantism—in Lessing's words—despairs of ever finding the truth and contents itself with the eternal quest after truth. This feeling of superiority on the part of Catholicism is more pronounced today than ever. And who would deny that it has very specious and weighty reasons for it?

The Eucharistic Congress held at Chicago this summer attracted a million worshipers from all lands. It was a public confession of faith, that must have heartened the souls of the participants and of Catholics the world over. Still more, however, was it a demonstration to the world, to the Protestant world, of the power and unity of the Catholic Church. And the demonstration accomplished its end. Seldom have those in the opposite camp been so impressed with the tremendous vitality of that old institution.

In the Church of England the Catholic leaven is working amazingly. The Anglo-Catholic movement is a movement towards Rome. If the pope would make some concessions on clerical celibacy and on his own infallibility hundreds of thousands of Anglicans would return to the "mother church". As it is, it is said that about 20,000 leave the church of England every year for the church of Rome. In France there has been a decided rapprochement between the Church and the government since the war. The priests had proved their entire loyalty by serving under, and dying for, the Tricolor in surprising numbers. Besides, the government could well utilize Catholic influence in the near East.

In Germany the Catholic Center is the decisive factor in nearly every administration. Wirth and Marx, two of its chancelors, are devout Catholics. Many charitable institutions fell into Catholic hands during the inflation period. The Church there is flushed as never before with hopes of triumph, now that the Protestant house of the Hohenzollern has been overthrown. The Evangelical Church in the German provinces ceded to bigoted Poland, is fighting a desperate battle for its faith as for its nationality.

In Italy, Mussolini, the opportunist, has buried the hatchet between the government and the Church. He sees in the Church a desirable ally for the restoration of Italy to ancient glory. He lends his authority to the Church in opposing Protestantism.

The only country in Europe that shows heavy losses for the Roman Church is Czecho-Slovakia. Two million Bohemians have severed their connection with Rome and set up an independent national church. And the only country in America where Romanism is on the defensive, is Mexico.

So a survey of the religious world seems to bring a good deal more comfort to the Catholic than to the Protestant.

Has, then, Protestantism been fighting for a wrong principle, or has it stressed that one principle so excessively that other principles, equally valuable, have been neglected? The Reformation accomplished the *religious emancipation* of the *individual.* The individual was freed from the organized church and made subject only to the Word and spiritual experience. That the work of the Reformers was necessary and that its effects were beneficial is evident from the fact that it gave birth to a new age. Every revolutionizing agency works some harm; the pendulum is apt to swing too far to the other side. But on the whole historians are agreed that the modern age made possible for the individual a fuller and freer life than had been enjoyed in the former. And certainly it is not without significance that the nations which adopted Portestantism are in the vanguard of civilization.

However, religious emancipation was followed by the emancipation of the *intellect.* Orthodoxy gave place to "Enlightenment." The miraculous was pushed out of court by Common Sense. Morality became the substance of religion and a few pale abstractions was all that was left to the religious soul. Creeds were relegated to the scrap heap and faith was emptied of its divine content.

It is true a new Awakening succeeded the reign of Rationalism, but Rationalism after being left stranded for a while by Philosophy in its metaphysical flight, came into its own again, with renewed vigor, in the birth of *Science.* Science is the goddess of this modern world. Its watchword is Evolution. Life is in a state of flux, it is always becoming, never static. That applies to the spiritual world no less than to the physical. Life forces are at work everywhere, lifting the lower to the higher. Observation, comparison, deduction are the steps by which we arrive at knowledge. By experiment we coax from nature her secrets; put an expert in his laboratory and there is no limit to his possibilities.

Theology, once the queen of the sciences, is the Cinderella

now. There is a remarkable falling off in the number of theological students. We notice that in our institutions; but it is general. Germany has not 50% of what she had in 1914 (2002 to 4345 in 1914). Other denominations in this country make the same complaint. And the remarkable thing is that the Catholic Church has plenty of material for the replenishment of her clergy.

We see that Protestantism is less able to withstand the scientific spirit. Protestants are bound to recognize truth wherever it is found. But we should be able to keep science from territory where it has no business. We need not capitulate to materialism or agnosticism or pantheism because these theories are espoused by brilliant minds. We should be able to defend vital positions against destructive criticism from learned, or merely popular, theologians. Today the battle cry is, here: Fundamentalism!, there, Modernism! It is possible to see partial truth on either side; in other words, to occupy a middle ground. The editor has been criticized for taking this position, but it is wholly justifiable and even necessary.

Nevertheless, it is true what Troeltsch, himself a leader of liberalism, says of the liberal theologian (he calls him a "spiritualizing" theologian, i. e., one who is not bound by dogma, but considers only spiritual attitudes important): Such theology can never build a church or maintain it. A solid faith in a real creed and real facts is the only one that will satisfy the average man, and it is the only one that keeps a church alive (see in T.'s "Soziallehren" p. 931-936.). His admission that this kind of theology is impotent as far as the needs and interests of the church are concerned, is surely well to be considered. An intellectual ministry is a source of pride to the church only if the light of its knowledge is used to illuminate the path of the church's humble followers.

Protestantism, in emancipating the individual from the authority of the organized church, has stepped on dangerous ground. The abuse of this privilege has led to a luxuriant growth of churches and sects that have deprived the churches of the Reformation of the power of united action and undisputed authority. Besides, it made the church a comparatively negligible quantity and gave the individual an undue sense of importance. The result can be seen in the wide-spread indifference of Protestants in point of church attendance.

So Protestantism is doubtless handicapped in many ways today in coping wtih the materialistic spirit of the times. That same dynamic force that broke the shackles of Rome, operates as a disturbing factor now. It must find its counterbalance in the social tendencies of the day. Individualism has run to seed. Individual freedom must seek its corrective and its use in social service.

In many ways we are being outstripped by Catholicism, and the trouble is we are not in a position to invoke the power of the church or the authority of a centralized hierarchy. The situation is not comfortable. With us help can only come from great personalities or from powerful movements. They can not be created or made to order. Scripture and church must be put in a place of new appreciation and importance. The members must be taught to look to the adversary and learn from him the forgotten lessons of authority, organization, loyalty, reverence and religious symbolism.

The extreme licence in our own Synod, its unmeasured and often absurd individualism, leading to a confusing diversity of tastes and methods, seems to offer a specially adapted field where Rome's example of dignity, adherence to established custom and loyalty to sound tradition could be most usefully applied.

"AS DEAD AS A DOORNAIL"

Our young people—and even older ones—have sometimes strange ideas as to what makes a church a live one. The other day an otherwise nice girl was speaking of a friend who had moved into her neighborhood. She said, "I should like to bring her to our church, but how can I seeing our own church is as dead as a door-nail. We haven't had a social or anything since spring" (It was then the month of August).

To persons of her kind the church is alive only if there is always something going on. Often enough ministers seem to have the same notion. They get uneasy if the social calendar does not show a sufficient number of dates. Parish papers frequently contain only descriptions of social functions, and occasionally some more thoughtful member of the congregation is puzzled because their church paper is not much different from the "social page" of the local daily. He, or she, wonders where the spiritual part comes in.

To a visitor from the "old country" the problem would hardly be intelligible. There the church is simply a place of worship. The members of the congregation have no social tie that binds them together. The very size of the church, as a rule, precludes personal acquaintance. Besides, the membership is composed of different classes; wealth or the lack of it, and other distinctions are a bar to friendly intercourse. Doubtless there are more organizations among different groups than there used to be, but their activities are more religious. The church does not feel called to be purveyor

of amusements. With us the situation is altogether different. The congregation is not only a religious unit but, to a very large extent, a social one. People don't like to go to a church where there are extremes in the social and economic status. According as they rate themselves, they go to a poor man's church, or a middle class one, or to one where they sit on soft cushions (the Lord would say, where they wear "soft raiment").

As a result of being a social unit, the church is also a social center. That has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is that the social side is apt to receive too much emphasis. The church takes its cue from the world, and the world's ways are more or less faithfully copied. Some pastors manage to keep out really objectionable features. Others take in nearly everything. They are the "broadminded" ones, they know we are young only once, and that to be a Chrisitan doesn't mean to go about with a long face.

Every candid observer knows that the current of worldliness is flowing deep and strong and that large tracts of sacred ground are already inundated. If the church is not to be completely secularized, it must move on higher ground. It may be a hard task to dam a flood that moves with elemental force. Still the church has been engaged in that work from the beginning, and not unsuccessfully. Faith conquers the world. Faith is born and becomes strong in the atmosphere of spirituality. More spirituality is what we need. Let no one think that it can easily be obtained. Nothing worth while on this earth comes without sustained effort. The minister who knows his time and feels his responsibility, with advancing years will be willing to pay a heavy price for real, that is, spiritual success (see Joshua ch. 1).

„Ich will um ihn graben und ihn bedüngen."

Lukas 13, 8.

Der Feigenbaum, von dem der Herr im 13. Kapitel des Lukas redet, hatte drei Jahre keine Frucht gebracht. Der Weingärtner schlägt vor, ihm, statt ihn abzuhauen, besondre Pflege zuteil werden zu lassen, damit er Frucht bringe. Wir wenden dies Gleichnis auf den Prediger und seine Predigt an. Vor Jahren hat einer die Predigt eine „Großmacht" genannt. Die meisten Prediger werden ihre Predigt nicht so hoch einschätzen. Mit dem Kirchenpublikum und der Welt im allgemeinen haben sie ihre Meinung von der Zug- und Schlagkraft der Predigt erheblich reduziert. Nichtsdestoweniger sind sie davon überzeugt, daß die Predigt, wenn sie ist, was sie sein sollte, Bedeutendes leisten könnte. Wenn der Prediger das „Graben und Düngen" ausführte, wovon das Gleichnis redete, so würde die Frucht nicht fehlen. Einige Worte der Erläuterung über diesen Punkt dürften angebracht sein.

Schon der **Vortrag** ist besondrer Aufmerksamkeit und Pflege wert. Einige wenige sind geborene Redner auch in dieser Beziehung. Wir haben junge Pastoren gekannt, die bei ihren ersten Predigten in Geste und Stimme sich so natürlich und ansprechend gaben, daß man sein blaues Wunder an ihnen sah. In der Regel ist es durchaus anders. Wenn einer sich wenigstens von allerhand störenden Manieren freihält, so ist das schon etwas. Noch mehr ist es, wenn er beherzigt, daß jede Geste einen Gedanken oder ein Gefühl bildweise ausspricht und demnach entsprechend gestaltet sein muß. Es ist töricht, mit der Faust auf die Kanzel zu schlagen, wenn man eine tröstliche Wahrheit ausspricht. Ueberhaupt operieren zu viele mit der Faust, statt zu bedenken, daß sie eine Hand und fünf Finger daran haben, welche auch in der Rede zu einer höchst mannigfaltigen Zeichensprache verwendet werden können. — Schreiber dieses findet, daß sein Vortrag am natürlichsten ist, wenn er, innerlich erwärmt, sich selbst vergißt.

Der Weingärtner im Gleichnis will um den Baum **graben,** ihm dadurch Licht, Feuchtigkeit, Leben zuführen. Der Boden, in dem der Prediger steht und seine Predigt, ist Schriftboden, sowie der Boden christlicher Erfahrung. Die meisten lassen diesen Boden unberührt oder kratzen ein wenig an der Oberfläche herum, wenn die Not sie treibt. Oder sie lesen die Gedanken andrer über die Schrift, ohne sich selber in sie zu versenken und unter Geistesleitung erleuchtete Augen des Verständnisses zu bekommen. Es ist unmöglich, am Sonntag Morgen seines Gegenstandes voll zu sein und von ihm kraftvoll zu zeugen, es sei denn man habe sich tagelang mit ihm gesättigt. Wer das nicht tut, wird das Gefühl haben, daß er die Begeisterung, die zu rednerischen Zwecken nötig ist, her-

aufpumpen muß, statt daß sie spontan von innen heraus quillt wie lebendiges Wasser. Wer Tag für Tag den Gegenstand, den er aus der Schrift geholt, erwägt und hin und her wendet, wird zu Zeiten erstaunt sein über die Fülle von Gesichtspunkten, die sich ihm auftut, sowie auch über die enge Fühlung, die die christliche Wahrheit mit dem Leben hat. Es wird ihm klar, daß man wirklich seines Glaubens **lebt,** und daß man das nicht bloß predigt. An dieser Erfahrung entzündet sich dann auch das Verlangen, in der Schrift in Zukunft mehr zu graben und so viel gutes Land nicht fürder brach liegen zu lassen.

„Und ihn **bedüngen**." Wenn ein Boden „ausgemergelt" ist, so bedarf er reichlich Dünger. Durch denselben werden ihm die Stoffe zugeführt, die dem Boden entzogen waren, und die zum Wachstum der Pflanzen nötig sind. Was für Phosphate oder Nitrate das sind, kann der Sachverständige uns sagen. Im Geistlichen werden wir fragen: Was für Dinge sind es, die dem Prediger hauptsächlich fehlen, und die er doch hochnötig gebraucht? Die Antwort wird je nach der Person verschieden ausfallen. Dem einen fehlt Sammlung, dem andern Festigkeit, Mut, Liebe, Sanftmut, Fröhlichkeit, Weisheit. Oder er denkt an die Gemeinde mit ihrer Gleichgültigkeit, Vergnügungssucht, Weltförmigkeit. Und wenn er in einem zusammenfassen soll, was in Hinsicht auf all dies ihm nötig ist, so wird er sagen: Geistliche **Kraft.** Höheres kann er nicht erstreben. Wenn Kraft von ihm und seiner Kanzel ausgeht, so erinnert er an seinen Meister und seine wahren Jünger. Die Kraft aber des Heiligen Geistes ist allezeit denen zuteil geworden, die darum zu bitten verstanden. Und erhörliches Gebet sprießt aus christlichem Leben, wie der Herr sagt: „So ihr **in mir bleibet** und meine Worte in euch, so werdet ihr bitten, was ihr wollt, und es wird euch widerfahren."

Drei Jahre hatte der Feigenbaum nichts getragen, dann erst begann das Graben und Bedüngen. Wieviel Jahre sind es bei uns, und wieviel bessere haben wir noch vor uns?

The Christian World

Young People Want More Religion in Church Services

From The Christian Herald, New York, July 10, 1926

Lewis Gaston Leary

Numerous questionnaires have been circulated with a view to discovering the attitude of modern youth to religion; but all of these which have come to my attention have been distributed in easily handled groups in schools or colleges where most of those who replied were, temporarily at least, out of touch with the usual church activities. It seemed to me that there might be greater practical value in finding out what young people who are still in close touch with the church think about its worship and its work. In order to secure the greatest possible freedom of expression, these questionnaires were not given but directly by myself, and signatures were not requested.

There have been returned replies from 86 churches in 52 communities in 6 Eastern States, with 2 churches on the Pacific coast used as checks. These 88 churches represent the following denominations: Baptist, Congregational, Community, Friends, Lutheran, Methodist-Episcopal, Presbyterian, Protestant-Episcopal, Reformed, Reformed-Episcopal. The ages of those who reply run from fifteen to twenty-five: almost exactly half are between seventeen and nineteen. Sixty per cent were girls.

A very careful reading fails to discover any essential differences of opinion due to age, sex, denomination, occupation, geographical location or social environment.

These young people are all church members, nearly all report that they attend church regularly. Only one is flippant, one is hypercritical, and one seems bitter.

The first group of questions have to do with general impressions.

1. *How much good do you get out of attending church services?* 2. *What part of the service helps you most?* 3. *If the services do not attract you, what seems to be the trouble?* 4. *How can they be made more attractive?*

Although very few answer the first question explicitly, the replies to the questions which follow make it clear that, with possibly three exceptions, all of these young people do get some good from church attendance.

In the answer to the second question, the numbers who mention various parts of the service as most helpful to them are as follows: the sermon, 57; the music, 32; the general atmosphere, 15; the prayers, 12; the devotional part, 5; the Scripture reading, 3; the children's sermon, 2; the whole service, 2.

Grouping these replies under two main heads, we find that the value of the devotional part is stressed by 72, and the sermon by 57. A closer analysis reveals an even larger emphasis on the worship as compared with the sermon; for while 57 state that whatever good they get from church attendance comes chiefly from the sermon, nearly all of these intimate that the sermons do not help them as much as they ought, while those who find their greatest inspiration in the worship have few criticisms to make. In all, there are 71 who find fault with the sermons, but only 11 who suggest changes in the form of worship.

Most older people, I think, will be surprised to hear that, of 129 young persons who answer the second questions, only 2 complain of lengthy and verbose prayers, while 12 single out the prayers as the most helpful part of the service. It seems as though young people can be led to God in prayer more easily than some of us had guessed.

It is also worthy of note that of those who rate the sermons highest, only 7 state that they are helped by any other part of the service, while of those who place the worship first, 31 say that they are also helped by the sermons.

The replies to the first group of questions may, therefore, be summarized thus:

A large majority say that they are most helped by the devotional part of the service. These have no criticisms to make of the worship, other than a few suggestions as to how it might be still more enlarged and beautified, and, even more than the mere figures indicate, they feel the inspiration of the entire service, including the sermon.

On the other hand, those who receive their greatest help from the sermon apparently get little good from the rest of the service—and in the sermon itself many of them fail to find all that they expect.

Why this spiritual hunger is so often unsatisfied is revealed in the answers to the next question.

5. *If you do not get much out of the sermon, what is the reason?*

As was to be expected, many young people characterize the sermons as "too long," "too dry" or "too deep." Others, however, say that the sermons are superficial, insufficiently prepared and carelessly delivered. Several complain that their ministers give lectures, instead of preaching the Gospel. "And I have to listen to lectures six days in the week."

One says that his minister preaches negative sermons which tend to undermine the belief of young people. A large number seem to feel that what is most lacking in the sermons is *religion*. "The sermons have not enough of God in them." "They lack spirituality and conviction." "There is an apparent lack of sincerity." "The topics have no bearing on everyday Christian living." "There are too many nonessentials." "There is not enough emphasis on first things." "There is not enough of Christ's redeeming love."

But let us listen for a more positive note.

6. *What kind of a sermon would appeal to you most? Please make a list of some sermon subjects or texts which will appeal to young people.*

To this question there are 119 replies, and 277 sermon topics are suggested.

Among these I find no evidence of a desire for sermons which are dramatic or sensational.

Nor is there any considerable interest manifested in the theological disputations which are agitating church courts and filling the columns of the daily press. Only 5 want to hear sermons on Fundamentalism vs. Modernism.

Other topics which apparently have little appeal for youth, as indicated by the very few who suggest them, are: the prohibition question, 2; the social mission of the church, 3; war and peace, 6; comparative religions, 3; church unity, 3; science and religion, 9. Out of 277 suggested topics, these numbers seem surprisingly small.

Yet 9 want sermons on prayer, and 10 ask for sermons on the life to come!

The virtues which youth feels should be most emphasized from the pulpit are significant. The following are specifically named, most of them by several different persons:

Faith	Patriotism
Love	Courage
Friendship	Strength
Neighborliness	Reverence
Altruism	Self-control
Tolerance	Honor
Justice	Duty
Fair Play	Service
Chivalry	Cheerfulness

St. Paul himself could hardly make a better list of the fruits of the Spirit!

As a foundation for effective sermonizing, they want more of the Bible, not less, and in particular they want more of Christ. One-fifth of all the suggested sermon topics mention *explicitly* the life or teachings of Christ, and implicit in nearly all the rest is the plea: "Tell us more about Him—His manhood, His words, His saving power, His relationships to our own lives."

Finally, they want sermons which "are not all through when church is over, but result in some form of action." "Challenging sermons." "The kind of sermon that stimulates me to action." "Those which cause a sort of militant spirit to rise in me." "Sermons that will make me want to buckle down and fight when things go wrong."

May the great Head of the church help us, "speaking the truth in love," to bring anxious, impetuous, honest young souls like these closer to Him.

The Three Preachers

From The Herald of Gospel Liberty, Dayton, August 19, 1926

Editorial

We talk about change, about progress and evolution; and sometimes we are misled thereby into thinking that we have an entirely new race of men and women. But basic human nature never changes.

And that is why we have the same kind of preachers today that we have always had. We have the same kind of men—basically the same, we mean. Ministers may appear vastly different from those of the past, but that is only because they are working themselves out in new and vastly different externals. The same types are there that have always been there. And that is the reason that we have the same types of sermons from generation to generation. The preachers simply reproduce themselves in what they say. They think that they are preaching the gospel—and they are. But far more than preaching the gospel are they revealing themselves, revealing how much they have read and thought and hoped and dreamed, and whether they are looking backward or forward, and whether they are real prophets of God with a vision of that which is to be or whether they are of common clay, settling down with the common crowd to be satisfied with things as they are. You never have to listen long to any preacher to tell which of these classes he belongs to, and which way his face is turned. It is not a matter of intellectual ability. Some giants in the pulpit have always looked backwards. Neither is it a matter of heart life. Some of the sweetest saints of God have always been defenders of things as they are—whether those things be slavery, or drink, or war, or industrial servitude. The mind of a man is like a magnet that draws into itself everything of its own kind.

Walk out among the churches today and see how true it is that preachers are reflecting themselves in their sermons, and how surprisingly true it is that they each fall into one or the other of three classes. There are those who cling to the past. They long for the "old-time religion." They tell about how much better things used to be than they are now. To hear their eloquent descriptions of the past one would imagaine that there was no sin or misery or infidelity in those days. It is only a fanciful past that can look inviting to any man today. Even the oft-repeated and pleasingly orthodox cry of "Back to Christ, back to Christ" more often than otherwise is an appeal simply to get back to Jesus of Nazareth—which is an entirely different thing from what it appears to be. These men want to copy his identical words and deeds, and carry them over out of an oriental setting into an occidental condition, rather than to catch his eternal spirit and inbreathe it into our own age and generation. More often than otherwise they want to get back to Jesus simply as a justification for some old dogma or mode or practice in which they themselves have long been indoctrinated and in which they immovably believe. Jesus never meant that men and women should try to make the Church and its practices in later ages simply an effete and washed-out

copy of what he and the apostles did in the Early Church. He tried to make it unmistakably plain that he would become the *living* Christ, and that he would "be with ye always, even unto the end of the world," and that he would be as vibrantly alive in every age and generation as he was in Judea two thousand years ago. If that does not mean that he is to be as alive to this present generation, as abreast of its thought and need and purpose, as adaptable to its manners and customs and its climate and its environment, as he was to those of the land and generation in which he lived in human flesh—if it does not mean all of that, then it has no intelligible meaning whatever. And no man is fit to preach the gospel who is not deeply conscious of the constant fellowship of such a living Christ, a Christ who can from day to day illuminate and make new his gospel in terms that will fit into the life and the needs of our own times as a magnificent urge and challenge.

More numerous than those who are looking backward, one will find the preachers who are simply contented with things as they are—not contented in the sense that they are not working hard, but contented in that they are trying to do it all in the same way in which they have always been accustomed to seeing it done. They are standpatters in church, in politics, in industry. There is no spirit of adventure in their veins; and if they believe in a land of promise at all, it is beyond the grave or at the Second Coming of Christ. They can see no difference between "vision" and "visionary." And so they content themselves with ministering to the sick, with feeding the hungry, with relieving the poor—but they are never on the side of any vast and foundational changes that would eliminate hunger and poverty and give men and women a better chance. They are priests, not prophets; and the Church if left within their hands would become the stagnated defender of autocratic and entrenched selfishness and evil, just as the Church always has become such when it has been left to the dominance of the priestly element.

Fortunately there has always been another type of preacher abroad —and happily his number is on the increase today. He believes in the past, believes in its heroes and saints and sages; and he reverently cherishes the rich heritage which comes to us from their lives. But as he does not idolize the past, so neither does he idealize the present. He believes that humanity is capable, through Jesus Christ, of something infinitely better than that which it has yet attained. To him the Kingdom of God is not some vague and indefinite mysticism, but an actual possibility to be worked out here and now for the good of mankind. And this conviction shows itself in all of his preaching. His whole life is an impetus, his sermons are an urge. He stirs men and churches to want to be something and to do something more worth while. In short, he is a Prophet of God. Under the spell of such preaching life takes on a new meaning and Christianity a new worth. Men and women catch the zest of it. Slowly but surely the movement spreads. And the world moves forward!

Baptists and the World Conference on Faith and Order

From The Baptist, Chicago, Sept. 4, 1926

By Robert A. Ashworth

The Universal Conference at Stockholm last summer dealt with practical questions of life and work and found them to be of a sufficiently tough fiber; the conference at Lausanne will concern itself with the still more difficult and prickly problems of faith and order.

Since the project was initiated more than sixteen years ago by the Protestant Episcopal church of our own country, much has been done to further it by the discussion and definition of its object and the enlistment of the support of other bodies of Christians.

The Object of the Conference

The avowed object of the conference is to discover what are "the next steps toward unity." It will not be authorized to take these steps, only to study and to report what, in its judgment, these steps may be.

It is at once a stupendous and a noble enterprise, a great venture of faith, fraught with enormous possibilities of weal to the cause of the kingdom of God. Conceived upon a wide scale, already assured of the cooperation of every major Protestant communion and of the Eastern Orthodox churches, it will undoubtedly constitute one of the great spiritual events of the century. It is difficult to see how anything but good can come of it.

What ought to be the attitude of the Baptist churches toward this undertaking?

In general we are committeed to participation in it. It is true the Southern Baptist Convention will send no delegates, the only Protestant denomination of size to take this attitude, but Baptists from the Northern Convention, from Great Britain, Canada and elsewhere will be there and must assume their share of responsibility for what takes place at Lausanne.

It may be said that since the professed object of the conference is to discover the next steps toward unity, that is, organic union, Baptists are at a peculiar disadvantage, because of their polity and principles, and can hardly hope to make any valuable contribution. They share that disability, perhaps, with all congregational bodies. The very conception of organic union, it may be said, is foreign to the Baptist genius. We recall the report of a distinguished commission that "Baptist churches do not have organic union among themselves." Nevertheless we are to send delegates to Lausanne.

A Cross Section of Christianity

It goes without saying that if Baptists have definitely adopted a negative attitude toward organic union on any basis, their usefulness at Lausanne will be to that extent limited. But if they can go not devoid of predilections, indeed, but with an open mind, their point of view will be not only a valuable but an indispensible contribution to the common store of Christian idealism assembled there. Laus-

anne should be a cross section of Christendom and no communion should be absent except that, if there be such, which has no convictions firmly held which it counts to be worth sharing.

It may be that organic union is not feasible for the present, or that it would be undesirable if practicable—that there is a better road to Christian brotherhood and progress. If either of these possibilities be true it were well that we should know it, and no company of men has ever yet gathered more competent to explore and determine them.

Baptists have stood aloof from the proposed conference thus far more than most communions, because of the suspicion that it will be dominated by a doctrine of the church with which they have as little sympathy as any other body of Christians on earth.

It is true that much of the literature that has thus far been circulated by the secretariat responsible for the promotion of the conference, has been strongly colored by the so-called "catholic" conception of the church. To those who hold it the church is an institution founded by Jesus Christ and authorized by him to represent him for all time and in all the world. Its authority to administer the sacraments, through which divine grace is imparted, comes directly from Jesus himself through the first apostles whom he ordained and those whom these ordained as their successors, and so on through the ages, an unbroken line of bishops throughout the years from the first century to the present day. To these bishops, thus in the apostolic succession, the authority to appoint the ministers of the church and to endow them with sacramental powers exclusively belongs.

Two Conceptions Poles Apart

It is a far cry from this conception to the radically low churchmanship of Baptists who recognize no clerical orders whatsoever in the strict sense, and who would be content, I suppose, with Dr. T. R. Glover's definition of the church as "simply the voluntary association for the mutual help and service of the world by those who have been saved." It is difficult to see how there can be an reconciliation or compromise between the two conceptions. They are poles apart. Undoubtedly the doctrine of the church, and questions of sacrament and ordination and church order which flow from it, constitutes the crux of the question of Christian union. This was the rock upon which the negotiations between the Lambeth bishops and the British Free Church Council foundered, and there was little salvage.

Nevertheless, two things ought to be said. In the first place, our Episcopal brethren, who thus far have wielded the laboring oar in preparation for the conference, ought not to be blamed that so elevated an ecclesiastical tone has characterized the literature which they have set forth. It was inevitable and right that it should be colored by their own sincere convictions. Other denominations with different convictions have given little time, thought, effort or money to the cause of the conference, and need not complain if their point of view has been inadequately expressed. And, in the second place, we need not take for granted that in the World Conference there will not be abundant time and opportunity afforded for the presentation

of any interpretation of the nature and function of the church which prevails anywhere in Christendom. Indeed, provision for it has already been made. If Baptists are convinced of the soundness of their position surely a platform is provided here from which it can be broadly proclaimed. If it is intelligently and cogently presented Baptists might make some converts. On the other hand, the presentation of contrary views and of positions held by great historic churches for many centuries might, it is at least conceivable, modify the views of Baptists, at least in so far as to make them broader and more inclusive and less meticulous.

In a word, as it appears to the writer, there is everything to be gained and nothing to be lost if Baptists go heartily into the conference. Affection rests upon understanding. If we understood our Christian brethren better than we do we should love them more. The World Conference is an adventure in Christian brotherhood.

Education Standard in the Methodist Ministry

Some facts of great interest have been brought out in a report which has just been made public with regards to the educational standards in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The statistics which were compiled by the Life Work Committee of that commission, cover 444 of the 456 men admitted into the full ministry of that church during 1925.

Many of our educators will be surprised to learn that in this great and wealthy church, with its commanding position and influence in cities as well as in country districts, only forty-one per cent of those admitted to its ministry last year had graduated from college and only twenty-five per cent had completed both college and seminary—the standard *recommended* by the discipline of the church. Thus seventy-seven per cent fell below the high mark set for its ministry. But it is even more surprising to learn that while the rule of the church requires that "no candidate shall be admitted to an annual conference on trial until he shall have "completed a course of study equivalent to the requirements for admission to college," except under "special conditions," yet one-fourth of those admitted to the full ministry last year were ordained under the "special conditions" which allowed even less than eighth grade work.

Another surprise is that this low standard did not come about because of the colored ministry, as sixty-seven per cent of those admitted under the "special conditions" were from the white conferences. The report still further shows that few of those with less than high school training expected to take further schooling.

A praiseworthy effort is being made by the Methodists to raise their ministerial requirements; but on the other hand one must admire a great church today which has the courage to make its standards low enough and flexible enough to admit the type of men who can be used and will be used to good advantage in the fields which will not sustain college-trained pastors.—*The Herald of Gospel Liberty*, 9-30-26.

Christianity East and West

From The Churchman, New York, Sept. 11, 1926

By James Sheerin

Athens, Greece.

The contrast between East and West in religion begins at Athens. Its birth can be set on Mars Hill, a bare rock next to the Acropolis, where a Jew named Saul was set up to express his new views and be laughed at. The laughter was not only at the doctrine of the Resurrection. Possibly that came merely as a crowning absurdity in a speech made by a provincial who dared to claim that he could tell philosophers about one God who was Lord Father to all, and therefore that all were "of one blood." The whole creed was ridiculous and impudent when uttered in the sight of the Temple of Athene, and is strangely different from not only intelligent paganism, but also from the controlling elements in the Eastern and Western religions that sprang from Apostolic teaching.

It is hard to account for this difference and similarity. It is partly a failure to emphasize the evolutionary thought of oneness of blood, and it is partly an innate desire for difference in rank and knowledge that most human beings, especially those obsessed by sacerdotal notions, will always find it difficult to eliminate.

Rome's Great Effort

The Roman Catholic Church made a great effort to implant the supreme authority of religion. It determined to make the secular affairs of life instruments of God under the control of His vicars who were heads of His Church. This determination has always existed. It persists today under many guises and in all lands. It is a condition that may be a development of Christian doctrines, but as it is it can hardly be said to be in full harmony with the Christian spirit. If the Protestant assumes that his denominations are free from the same emphasis on authority, there may be admitted a difference in emphasis while there is a considerable resemblance in fact. No pope in Rome was ever more dictatorial in his sphere than the congregational pastor of a Colonial church in New England.

The Eastern Church, under its various names of Greek, Orthodox and Russian, seems at times, if the exotic autocracy of the Czar be left out of consideration, less organized, less exact in either ritual or dogma and altogether more emotional. If it is touched by the atmosphere of intellectualism, it is largely as a secondary thing. If it played politics, as it did in the days of St. Chrysostom, it was only a passing phase, and never a determined and continuous policy. It seems a loosely constructed aggregation of Churches and never could be, at any period of its history, called a great and aggressive business corporation. It has imbibed for ages Oriental eagerness for small donations with an equally Oriental indifference to vast organic power and obedience to hard and fast custom and law. The scholarship of Athens and the military control of Rome are treated alike as of secondary character, so that the observer is tempted to assume that they do not exist in the East.

Too Ready

It looks sometimes as though the Anglican Church is too ready to take the part of a sluggish Eastern Church. While Anglicanism, which really started all social service in parish houses, has lately begun to deprecate its work in such practical affairs and has sold some of its greatest parish houses, Romanism has been frankly adopting athleticism as a direct part of its duty to the public. Just as the Roman Catholic Church took over Ancient Rome in its governmental strength, its canon laws, its militant control, etc., all of which the Greek more or less ignored, so today the Roman Church has taken into her all embracing arms the organization of youthful tastes in bodily and social exercises. So, too, as soon as Protestantism has turned over its educational work among children to the secular Governments, or has become lukewarm as to Sunday Schools, Rome begins the vastest movements of her long history in taking up such work.

But that it has been too often based merely on aggrandisement, i. e., a work done not only because it is good but because it pays in the organization sense, is probably the reason that it fails in the long run. Our Lord's great dictum was that the only Christian way to save one's life is to be willing to lose it. Wherever the permanence and power of the organization has been made the dominant issue, church work has always failed. The East has its degeneration from indolence sometimes; from impractical mysticism often; and at times from mere superstition and unchristian conflict. Rome has hers from overemphasis of her own rights and prerogatives. The result is the same in both cases, namely, a stagnant civilization and an array of beautiful buildings going to decay, besides priest and people indifferent to fact of decadence.

Dispersion has always a sad sound. Seldom has a sadder hour of worship been spent than on a Sunday morning in Nice. It is a beautiful church the Russians have there. There were fine old faces in the congregation, particularly among the gray-bearded men. Always a Greek or Russian service seems more homelike than the Roman. It is partly owing to the intimate way in which they build their churches, partly to the proximity of priest to people in spite of the separating screen, partly to the shortness of the nave and largely because the laity are in evidence in all parts of the service, in or out of the chancel. The mysterious movements back and forth, the quiet opening and shutting of the doors in front of and at either side of the altar, the plaintive tones of the music, the wonderful heavy undertone of an unearthly megaphone-like bass, the manly intoning of the priests, the reverent people standing for an hour or more, the quick devout movements of hands and head, the occasional kneeler on the bare floor—all these combine to make a service peculiarly devout and impressive. Then overhead, and all about the sides, and in front are the Byzantine faces of paintings and icons, every one of them gazing fixedly out without a suggestion of movement but full of a strange devotion superior to or apart from life. There is thus fascinating difference between Italian sacred pictures and the Eastern

Orthodox. Always the Italian saintly face is alert. This is never so with the Byzantine pictures of Greek and Russian churches. There is no association with life. The faces look out at one steadily, as if perhaps the world puzzled them a bit, or as if they were in another world in which the look is of the distilled essence of spiritual worship.

A Great Gulf

Whether we prefer the one or the other of these religious pictures, there is to be found in them the great gulf fixed between Roman and Eastern ideas of Christian perfection.

The perplexity can hardly belong to the doings of the congregation, unless one assumes that it belongs to so high a churchman as to be a bit puzzled and shocked by what is going on! There is no attempt to control the people of the congregation. They shake hands heartily. They laugh and converse as freely as in a Methodist church. They seem happy to see one another, and their looks and actions fit with the solemn service, so as to make it more homelike and helpful. Perhaps it is all the spontaneous social action of men and women who know they are but sojourners and look for a city and country afar off.

How We Do Not Get Our Saints

The mode of canonization is a very complicated one, and very expensive. It requires a large amount of money to have a man declared a saint who can be venerated at the altars of the Roman Catholic Church. Father Beccari, the postulator general of the Jesuits, who is the author of the article on canonization in the Catholic Encyclopedia, tells us that if the postulator of the cause "chooses to spend a moderate sum, the entire cost from the first process to the solemn beatification will not cost him less than $20,000. The expenses of the process from beatification to canonization will easily exceed $30,000." There are three processes required. First, the candidate is decreed Venerable. After further processes, he may be declared blessed, which allows his public cultus. But the saint himself must cooperate with the authorities of the Church on earth, or he will get no further with his honors. If, after he has been beatified, he does not work two undoubted miracles, the bull of canonization cannot be issued by the Pope. In this bull, when it is issued, he not only permits, but commands the public veneration of the saint. Father Beccari, in his Encyclopedia article, gives the items of the cost of canonization, and they are of rather curious interest. Citing the cases of two saints who were canonized by Leo XIII, h shown that the cost was $42.816.87. One is tempted to ask, Why the 87 cents? In Italian lira the sum was 221,849.10. Of this, 152,840 lira were charged to decorating St. Peter's: lights, architectural designs, labor, and superintendence. The Pontifical Mass cost 8,114 lira; the vestments came to just under 13,000; while the Vatican Chapter took 18,000 "for perquisites for decorations and candles." "Porpine and Competenza," whatever they may mean, cost 16,936 lira. It is gratifying to note the simplicity of

the Holy Father's part in the canonization. Gifts amounting to less than $300 were presented to the Pope on the occasion. Had the Vatican Chapter been as modest regarding its perquisites, the whole business would have been more edifying, and the saint might have got his rights in the Church long before he did. It is sometimes said as against the Anglican Church, "It has no saints." There may be two opinions about that, but, in any case, it is thankworthy that we do not get our saints in such commercial fashion as that which Father Beccari describes.—*Monachus Minor in Holy Cross Magazine.—The Living Church*, 9-18-26.

Book Review

(When ordering books, please mention this Magazine.)
NOTE—Reviews, when not signed, are by the Editor.

The Man Nobody Knows. A discovery of the real Jesus, by Bruce Barton, author of "What shall it profit a man?" The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1925. 220 pages.

The person of Jesus is the problem of the ages, but has not the problem perhaps been made harder than necessary, has it not been made insoluble by the miraculous element that has been found in it? Jesus has been looked upon as the God-man, the one who combines in himself the divine and human nature. And while the first ages emphasized in him the true humanity, a later development is more interested in his deity. As a result it has been found impossible to see in him a real human being, to understand his growth as a real human process. Instead of his being one who was tempted in all things just as we are, he seems to be one who, on account of his divine nature, is removed from all real temptations; with whom victory was always a foregone conclusion; and who is, therefore, as unlike ourselves as he could possibly be. It might perhaps, lead to a more satisfactory result if we disregarded speculations as to the divine and supernatural element and tried to understand the person of Jesus as we do other great men, who started out with an unusually rich moral and spiritual endowment and developed it normally to its utmost possibility.

A number of lay writers have recently taken this course and offered us lives of Jesus, that seem to have found a favorable reception with many. Hendrik von Loon, in "the story of the Bible," represents Jesus as a teacher of a spiritual democracy, dangerous to vested interests. These interests succeed in putting him to death, but his idea survives and will finally triumph. Mary Austin, in "A Small Town Man," describes Jesus as the world's greatest genius among mystics, but intellectually bound by the narrower views held by the people of a small town. His wonderful mysticism and his not-yet-understood psychic powers explain the great movement we know as Christianity. John Oxenham, in the "Hidden Years," draws the picture of Jesus as he developed before his ministry. He is a strong, manly, aggressive affectionate character, a boy who would naturally become a fine man. It is a construction of pure fancy but it is an attempt to account rationally for the successful man Jesus later became. Mr. Browne in his "This Believing World," giving a review of the great religions of mankind, portrays Jesus as a Jew who summed up in his teaching the best moral and religious features of Old Testament

religion, the belief in the one, living God, the father of all, and the love of man. In doing this he encountered the jealousy of the ruling classes and was put to death. It is not quite sure whether he considered himself the Messiah, but he certainly remained true to Judaism to the end. He did not found a new religious Christianity. He is not the founder but the foundling of this new religion and the one who found him is Paul. Paul made of him the Saviour God, so frequently mentioned in the mystery cults of the day, and so Christianity become a universal religion.

Bruce Barton's book belongs in this class. He thinks the conventional life of Jesus makes of him a shadowy figure which lacks what our time seeks above all things, reality, and, besides, it has those ascetic features that may have appealed to a past that is long gone, but fails of response in this modern age. When Barton was a boy in Sunday school the picture of Jesus, on the wall, showed a pale young man with flabby forearms and a sad expression, his face adorned with red whiskers. Years went by and the boy, Barton, grew up and became a business man. He began to wonder about Jesus. He said to himself: "Only strong magnetic men inspire great enthusiasm and build great organizations. Yet Jesus built the greatest organization of all. It is extraordinary. In the sermons he heard he found no explanation for the phenomenon. Then he went to the sources and there he found that Jesus was no weakling, no kill-joy, no failure at all, that the *elements of success* in him were largely those of the *American business man.* No one else had ever seen him thus; Barton had discovered the man whom nobody else ever presented in this way. So he decided to write this book. He was sure every business man would read it and send it to his partners and his salesman. For it would tell the story of the founder of modern business.

He selected for his motto the word of the 12 year-old boy Jesus: "Wist ye not—business," with the accent on the *business.*

To him Jesus' life is the proudest *achievement story* mankind knows. To explain this a miraculous explanation has always been used in the past. His divine nature has been made to bear the burden of his extraordinary achievement. Barton would rather find the key in his personal human traits. At 12 years of age Jesus experiences the first awakening of his consciousness of power. But he returns home to his parents and in the exercise of his calling he becomes a strong, healthy, self-reliant man. John the Baptist's ministry calls him forth. Soon, however, he leaves John, for John was an ascetic, Jesus is a man among men. John had other limitations, he could denounce but not construct; he was no organizer. In his temptation Jesus found himself assailed by doubt; every great personality has to pass through such a stage. His temptation was real, but he emerged from it with the assurance that something in him was superior to circumstances. Men who looked upon him from that hour felt the authority of one who has put his spiritual house in order, and knows clearly what he is about."

What were the elements of his power? First, his *personal mag-*

netism, the essense of which was his sincerity. This was felt by Pharisees even (Nicodemus), by the people, even rough soldiers.

Second, he had great *executive talent*, shown by picking the right kind of men and by training them with patience and wisdom. "He had only 12 special followers, they were untrained simple men, with elementary weaknesses and passions. Yet because of the fire of his personal conviction, because of his marvelous instinct for discovering their latent powers, and because of his unwavering faith and patience, he molded them into an organization which carried on victoriously."

In a chapter, the "*Outdoor Man*," the author dwells on the marvelous physique of Christ. He had the hardened body and the staying power of the professional athlete. The money changers fled from him not only because of the flaming moral purpose flashing from his eyes but because the sleeve dropping back revealed muscles hard as iron. His personality appealed to women because he was strong. He would heal the lame; health poured out from that strong body into the weak one like electric current from a dynamo. "Walk!" he says. Do you suppose for one minute that a weakling, uttering that syllable, would have produced any result? In the storm scene on Lake Gennesaret we see in Jesus one of the finest examples of self-control. And even Pilate can't but admire him. The "involuntary testimony of the flabby cynical Roman in the presence of perfect strength, perfect assurance, perfect calm: "Behold," he cried, "the man!"

Christ was a *sociable* man. They have said of him, he never laughed. What a wicked falsehood! It has robbed the world of the joy and laughter of the great companion. The first theologians lived in sad days; they were men of introspection. Baffled by the death of Jesus, they rejected the splendid truth and fashioned a creed instead. Lambs were put to death in the temple, as a sacrifice for the sins of the worshipers; ergo, Jesus was the Lamb of God. The sacrifice of an innocent son was required to get the father to forgive the sins of man. Small wonder that the Jesus of such a doctrine was supposed never to have laughed. Jesus, on the contrary, teaches men to believe in a kindly, indulgent, joy-loving father. Had the prophets taught that God is a God of justice (Amos) a good God (Hosea), Jesus, going to the utmost limit, proclaims: God is the father of all, throw away your fear!

Jesus was the *greatest advertizer* that ever lived. He always had something new to say or do. The author shows in what striking headlines Jesus' work could have been advertised if they had had newspapers at that time. But even as it was, he was successful in "selling" his goods to the people, for he gave service, not sermons (the sermons were only incidental). And if he did preach, it was in parables. And these parables were masterpieces. Being condensed, simple, sincere, emphatic, they have never been surpassed in preaching value or advertizing power.

Jesus is the *founder of Modern Business*. He gave us the idea of service. Our great business captains have learned from him. The

best of them are not in business for money primarily but for service. The main points of Christ's business philosophy are: 1. Who ever will be great must render great service. 2. Who ever will find himself at the top must be willing to lose himself at the bottom. 3. The big rewards come to those who travel the second, undemanded mile.

Jesus is the Master. The final tests of a man's life are, how does he bear disappointment, how does he die? We see him deserted in turn by his home town, his best friend (John), his relatives, the crowd. He is alone with his disciples. And these are his words: "Let not your hearts be troubled. . . I have overcome the world." There is nothing in history so majestic. Then the eleven also forsake him. He is on the cross. All is over. Surely the victory of his enemies is complete. He could do no miracle there, hanging on the cross, and yet—"Jesus." It was the voice of one of the robbers. "Jesus," he says painfully, "remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom!" Read that and bow your heads, says Barton, especially those who have pictured him weak, as a man of sorrows, uninspiring, glad to die. When his enemies had done their work, he so bore himself that a crucified felon looked into his dying eyes and saluted him as king."

With these words the book closes. The resurrection is not mentioned. Barton felt no doubt that he had established his case: Jesus' life the greatest success story that was ever written, he himself the most wonderful organizer of whom history has left a record.

The trouble is only that his story doesn't square with the facts. Jesus' life up to his death was so little a success in the eyes of his own disciples that without his resurrection there wouldn't be a Christian church. Barton doesn't even mention his resurrection, and yet that was the fundamental fact in the disciple's own life and their testimony. He sees in Jesus' death that of a man who dies without loss of faith in himself and with out bitterness. Jesus himself links it up inseparably with human sin and divine forgiveness. And so have all his disciples. And so he has become the Lamb of God, a figure for which Barton has only contempt. He thinks it means weakness and unmanliness, while it does mean innocence and sacrifice, and a sacrifice of God's own providing. It is gospel truth and the "faith of our fathers" that Christ opened the way to the father, and that without him, his life and death, no one comes to the father.

Sin and forgiveness of sin by divine grace are the dominant terms in the bible, in the New Testament, in the faith of the church. Barton hardly ever mentions sin. He has no conception of the radical perversity of human nature. To him the appeal of a magnetic personality is sufficient to lead man to the way of righteousness. That a man must be born again by the spirit of the living God, we fail to notice in his pages.

Again, his gospel, or his view of the Christ, may be very acceptable to the American business man. But we are not all business men. How will it appeal to the worker? The social question is not as much as touched upon in the book. The workers don't believe that the business man is in business for service chiefly; they are sure

he is there for profit. And how does the worker fare in an economic system where the Fords, Garys and others are the ideal representatives? The kingdom of God is to Barton identical with "pure happiness;" that it implies a new social order in accordance with Christ's spirit, has never even entered his dreams.

His explanation is purely natural and rationalistic. He uses Christ's deeds as evidences of his psychic power. But when it comes to real miracles, the feeding of the 5,000 e. g., he says: "Just what happened is a mystery." But he either fed them or did not feed them. And if he didn't, how explain the results? Barton's is simply another case of building up a rational view of Christ's person and life without a rational explanation of the results.

We cannot but reject the whole plan. It has a few healthy and commendable features, but as a well rounded, satisfactory, popular and plausible as well as scriptural view of Christ's life it is a complete failure.

The Four Socratic Dialogues of Plato. Translated into English with Analyses and Introductions by Benjamin Jowett, Late Master of Balliol College. Oxford at the Clarendon Press. Impression of 1923. 274 pages.

We are glad that this book happened to fall into our hands. It contains the four dialogues in which Plato describes the last hours of his great master, Socrates. The second, the Apology, gives the substance of the defense made by Socrates. The charge against him was, "Socrates is an evil-doer and a curious person, searching into things under the earth and above the heaven; and making the worse appear the better cause, and teaching all this to others. He is a corrupter of the youth, who does not receive the gods whom the state receives, but introduces other new divinities." In replying Socrates claims that he is a gadfly sent to rouse the Athenians from their "dogmatic slumbers," and to make them reflect on the meaning and purpose of their lives. He has a divine mission conferred upon him by the Delphic oracle. His object in particular has been to disclose the limitations of human knowledge. The conceited have been provoked by his merciless uncovering of their ignorance and have taken their revenge by arousing public opinion against him. He is however, no atheist, in any sense, nor a corrupter of youth or a public nuisance. He, rather, is a benefactor of the state, and instead of suffering penalty he deserves to be kept, for the rest of his life, in the Prytaneum (at public expense).

In the 3rd dialogue, Crito, his rich friend, offers him the opportunity of escape before the sentence is executed. Socrates is touched by the generosity of his pupil but he refuses to accept because he is a citizen of the state and as such is bound to avoid anything that might weaken its authority.

The *Phaedo*, the last dialogue, is the most beautiful and lofty of the four. Here the great subject of immortality, its pro and con, is

discussed in Plato's most exalted style. His arguments are partly based on the nature of the soul, partly on the necessity of retribution. At times he descends to the realm of the mythological and popular belief. He feels himself that he cannot dogmatize on his great subject, but, he says, "something of the kind is true."

Jowett says of these dialogues: "The art of concealing art is nowhere more perfect than in these writings describing the trial and death of Socrates. Their charm is their simplicity, which gives them verisimilitude; and yet they touch, as if incidentally, and because they were suitable to the occasion, on some of the deepest truths of philosophy. There is nothing in any tragedy, ancient or modern, nothing in poetry or history (with one exception*) like the last hours of Socrates in Plato."

We feel we should deprive our readers of a privilege if we did not transcribe for them the last pages of the "Phaedo," at least in part: "Now the hour of sunset was near and Socrates, coming out again, sat down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer entered and stood by him, saying: . . . . I am sure you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are to blame. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be—you know my errand. Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out. Socrates looked at him, and said: I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid. Then turning to us, he said, How charming the man is. . . . How generously he sorrows on my account. We must do, as he says, Crito; and therefore let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared; if not, let the attendant prepare some."

After a while the jailer returns with the cup, giving Socrates directions as to how to proceed. . . . . "Socrates said, I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world—even so—and so be it according to my prayer. Then raising the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of my self my own tears were flowing forth. . . . Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness: What is this strange outcry? he said . . . . Do not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then and have patience. When we heard his words we were ashamed and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail; and when he lay on his back the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel; and he said, No; and then his leg, and so upward and upward, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end.

* He means, Jesus in the "Upper Room." Ed.

He was beginning to be cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said—they were his last words—he said: Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt? The debt shall be paid, said Crito; is there anything else? There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth. Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend; concerning whom I may truly say, that of all men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest, and justest and best."

No one will read these dialogues with out profit; and many times his affections will be deeply roused. Jowett's translation is perfect, and his own comments, especially on Phaedo and the immortality of the soul, are of the highest value.

The Mystics of the Church, by Evelyn Underhill. London, James Clarke and Co., 1926, 260 pages.

Our time is not favorable to the culture of the mystic life. The mystic has at all times been a lover of quietude, and our world is filled with no end of noises. The mystic seeks detachment from the things of this earth, but when was this ever harder than in this materialistic age? He aims to rise to spiritual heights in defiance of outward circumstances; this "social" age tries to alter circumstances so as to make the pursuit of virtue and piety easier.

Nevertheless, for some time there have been many signs of a reawakened interest in mysticism. The number of books written on the subject recently, is quite large. It is felt on many sides that the intellectualism as well as the materialism of the age need the counterbalance of a new emphasis on the spiritual side of man. The mystics were experts in this realm. They were geniuses of the devotional life. The majority of Christians may be unable to follow them in all their experiences but a few may, and all will be benefited by a sympathetic study of their lives. This is the position of the writer of this book. Troeltsch, in his "Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen," divides the religious types into three groups: the church, sects, and the mystics. He characterizes the mystic as a pronounced individualist who has no interest in organizations; who, moreover, disregards ceremonials and doctrines. Miss Underhill does not agree with Troeltsch. According to her the mystic, cherishing the love of man as well as the love of God, and gathering at least like-minded people together in closer fellowship, has been of great benefit to the corporate life of the church.

At any rate, she writes in this book on the mystics "of the church," meaning to dwell on the helpful qualities of the men of the mystic fold, not on their emotional excesses. Mysticism is the direct intuition or experience of God. To the Christian mystic God and Christ are not merely objects of belief, but living facts experimentally known at first-hand. Every human soul has a latent capacity for God, and in some this capacity is realized with an astonishing richness. The

real mystic desires, with the Flemish Ruysbroek, to be "by the grace of God a life-giving member of Holy Church." "So long as we regard the mystics as spiritual freaks, practicing some intense and esoteric sort of religion opposed to that which is sometimes called "practical Christianity," they will remain foreign to us. But if we receive their messages with the sympathy and humility which we must bring to all works of art that we desire to understand, then they will increase our religious sensitiveness, give to us a new standard and incentive in prayer and initiate us, at least in some degree, into the veritable riches of the House of God." The technique of mysticism originating under Neo-Platonic influences (Plotinus a. 204-270), was elaborated by Cassian (b. 350) in his "Dialogues." The life of communion with God developes by gradual stages. In the main there are three steps in the "mystic way:" the stage of purgation (the purification of character and detachment from earthly interest), of illumination (perception of the true values of existence in God's light), and of union (the perfect and self-forgetting harmony of the regenerate will with God).

Christian mysticism derives, however, also directly from biblical sources. John and, especially, Paul were true mystics. The author makes an interesting analysis of Paul's mystical experiences. "During the 10 or twelve almost unchronicled years in which re remained a subordinate working in the Jewish Christian church, he, too, claims to have enjoyed visions and revelations of the Lord (2. Cor. XII). At this time he was faced by the task of conquering his own nature (purgative period). But when his vocation definitely declared itself, perhaps about a. d. 46-47, this mainly subjective stage of development was replaced by that deeper, more fruitful sense of total possession by the Spirit of Christ, which supported his astonishing labors and sufferings and inspired his writings." We see the author confines himself to describing two stages in the apostle's life instead of three; as he indicates in another place: "A long development lies between the young zealot's capitulation outside of Damascus, with its note of submission and awe, and the sense of being at home in the spiritual world." "There are two distinct but complementary currents in Christian feeling and worship. One is directed towards God, the Eternal and Infinite Spirit; the other towards His incarnate revelation in Jesus Christ." One is theocentric (Augustine), the other, Christocentric (Paul).

In giving the historic development of mysticism the writer begins with the mystics of the early church, Cassian, Augustine and Dionysius the Areopagite; goes on to the early Middle Ages (Richard of St. Victor, St. Bernhard, and others); then to the Franciscan mysticism; to the English (Rich. Rolle): German and Flemish mystics (Eckhart, Friends of God, "Theologia Germanica," Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroek); has a special chapter on Catherine of Siena and Catherine of Genoa; the Spanish mystics (Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa, St. John of the Cross); French mysticism (Francis of Sales, Pascal, Fenelon, the Quietists). In ch. XI some Protestant mystics are treated

(Boehme, Angelus Silesius, Fox and the Quakers, Will Law, Henry Martyn). He fails to mention Tersteegen! The book closes with Modern Mystics. The only one mentioned here that is generally known, is Sadhu Sundar Singh.

The subject discussed is treated throughout with great sympathy and understanding. A much neglected phase of the Christian life emerges into fuller light, and the reader cannot but feel a desire to follow these leaders in contemplative experience as far as he may.

The Origin of the New Testament and the most important consequences of the new creation by Adolf von Harnack, translated by J. R. Wilkinson. Williams and Norgate, London, 1925. 229 pages.

Supreme reverence for the history and teaching of Christ led the early church to collect the writings about Him. They are placed on a level with the Old Testament, "the Holy Scriptures and the Gospel." The idea of a canon of Scripture was inherited from the Jews. The fact that a book was considered to be by an apostle gave it an authoritative standing. Justin Martyr (140-150) is the first one referring to the "Memoirs" of the apostles and ranking them with the writings of the prophets (Old Testament). Marcion, almost a contemporary of Justin, established a canon consisting of "Gospel" and "Apostle," the former identical with Luke, and the Pauline epistles. Before the end of the 2nd century the Four Gospels were firmly established in the west. The kernel of the Apostolic writings was then everywhere the Acts and 13 epistles of Paul. In the Canon discovered by Muratori in 1740, the earliest known list of canonical books, we find, besides the parts mentioned, the epistle of Jude, the second of John, Revelation, and the Apocalypse of Peter. In the end Hebrews, II Peter, II and III John, and James won acceptance, owing chiefly to the belief that they were written by Apostles. Origen (189-254) included Revelation in his list of genuine books.

Harnack thinks that Marcion's Canon (with the 10 Pauline epistles) greatly influenced the church. Marcion had an excessive reverence for St. Paul. Could the churches lag behind him in this? In Harnack's opinion they decided to go him one better and accepted the 13 epistles, instead of Marcion's ten.

In weighing the consequences of the fixing of the Canon, Harnack on the whole acknowledges that great and lasting good has resulted therefrom. But he also lists quite a number of undesirable effects. From the New Testament was evolved a Christian mythology, God's Trinity in Unity; Christ the Logos, before, in and after creation; his virgin birth; descent into hell; ascension, etc. Furthermore the identification of Paul's epistles with the teaching of the Lord thrust the simple picture of Christ in the gospel aside and substituted for it a theology and an artificial scheme of salvation. We notice that a writer's theological position has a great deal to do with his value-judgments. Nevertheless it is instructive to follow a great historical authority in his researches into the formative period of New Testament literature.